

---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<http://books.google.com>





31.

141.



600005959Y





E. 1/4 1132

# CATECHETICAL CONFERENCES

ON THE

## HOLY EUCHARIST,

The Sacrifice of the Mass ;	} Meditation, or Mental
Frequent Communion ;	} Prayer ;
The Confraternity of the	} The Love of God, and
Blessed Sacrament ;	} The Sacrament of Con-
Christian Perfection ;	} firmation.
Prayer ;	}

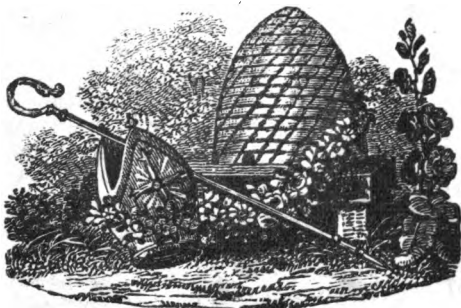
BY

THE RIGHT REV. JAMES LANIGAN, D. D.

R. C. BISHOP OF OSSORY,

*Who died in the City of Kilkenny, in the Year 1811.*

~~~~~  
ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.  
~~~~~



**Dublin:**

**PRINTED BY JOHN COYNE, 24, COOKE-ST.**

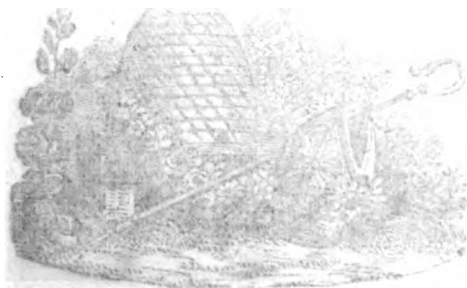
**PRINTER AND BOOKSELLER**

*To the General Society of the Christian Doctrine.*

1831.

Digitized by

141. Google

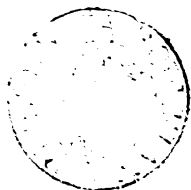


# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE.
<i>Conference on the Holy Eucharist.....</i>	1
<i>on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.....</i>	11
<i>on the Effects of the Blessed Eucharist.....</i>	55
<i>Do. do. continued</i>	63
<i>Do. do. do.</i>	73
<i>Do. do. do.</i>	82
<i>Do. do. do.</i>	90
<i>on Frequent Communion.....</i>	100
<i>On the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.....</i>	107
<i>Do. do. do. continued</i>	115
<i>Rules of the Confraternity.....</i>	121
<i>On the desire of Christian Perfection.....</i>	122
<i>On the Perfection of our Ordinary Actions</i>	127
<i>On Purity of Intention.....</i>	132
<i>On Prayer.....</i>	136
<i>On Meditation, or Mental Prayer.....</i>	146
<i>Various Methods of Meditating.....</i>	153
<i>On Meditation.....</i>	156
<i>On the Love of God.....</i>	175
<i>On the Sacrament of Confirmation.....</i>	186





# CONFERENCES.

---

## ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

**“Take ye and eat; this is my body.”—Matt. chap. xxvi.  
verse 26.**

How far it would be useful in this country to preach on subjects of controversy from our pulpits may excite speculative curiosity to inquire. But if we consult practical utility more than idle curiosity, it will be admitted I trust by all, that in Roman Catholic congregations, whose faith is fixed and not wavering, moral discourses on Gospel subjects in general will be more effectual to every useful purpose than controversy can be; and this is the plan, with very few exceptions, pursued throughout all Ireland. If it should be asked why this plan should be deviated from this day, by making the real presence in the blessed Eucharist the subject of a discourse, we answer, that as it is intended to deliver several discourses on this Sacrament, on its great effects and benefits, on the fit dispositions and due preparations to receive it worthily; and as all these great effects and benefits are founded on the real presence in the Eucharist, it was judged proper to establish

this capital dogma of our faith by direct proofs and evident arguments.

The doctrine of the Catholic Church in this matter is, that in the Sacrament of the blessed Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is *truly, really, and substantially contained under the appearances of bread and wine*. This definition is from the Council of Trent. The Council says—

*First—After the consecration of the blessed Eucharist*, against the Ubiquists, who maintained that the body of Christ was every where, and even in the host before it is consecrated.

*Secondly—The Council adds, truly*, against the Sacramentarians, who held that the body and blood of Christ was present figuratively only, and not truly.

*Thirdly—The Council adds, really*, against the Calvinists, who held that the body and blood of Christ was not really present, but objectively only—that is, inasmuch as it is apprehended by faith.

*Fourthly—The Council adds, substantially*, against the Calvinists, who held that the body and blood of Christ was substantially only in heaven, and in the blessed Eucharist accidentally—that is, according to some quality, virtue, or efficacy.

The Catholic doctrine can be clearly proved: first, from the 6th chapter of St. John—God is ever faithful in all his promises; he can neither deceive nor be deceived. Hence it is a certain truth, that whatever God has solemnly promised, he has most certainly fulfilled. Now Christ has promised in this chapter, from the 52d verse, “That he  
 ‘I give us his body and blood’ truly and really,  
 not figuratively.

*First*—If he did not mean thereby to give his body really, and not figuratively, such an expression would be either absurd or unintelligible; for he could as well then, as at any other time, give his body and blood by a figure or by faith. He must, therefore, have meant to give his body and blood in a manner different from a figurative giving, or giving it by faith.

*Secondly*—The Capharnaïtes and some of his disciples, to whom our Saviour then addressed his discourse, understood from his words that he meant to give his body and blood really and truly, and not figuratively or metaphorically; for they were scandalised at his words; they could not conceive how he could give his flesh to them to eat, and said that this was a hard saying, &c.

Now if they did not understand his words about a true and real eating, and not about a figurative or metaphorical eating, they could not have reason to be scandalised; for they could easily have conceived how he could give his flesh to eat figuratively: nor could his saying appear hard to them.

*Secondly*—Their error did not consist in understanding Christ's words about a true and real eating; for Christ did not correct their error in this sense, as he doubtlessly would have done, had they erred in so understanding his words. On the contrary, he confirmed his words again by an oath, and by referring to the miracle of his ascension. But their error consisted in this. They never suspected, nor had any idea, that Christ's body and blood was to be contained in the blessed Sacrament, in an invisible and sacramental manner, as we Catholics believe it to be; but they grossly ima-

gined that he was to give them his body and blood, in the same shape, form, and visible manner that they then saw it, and that they were to eat it in the same manner that they eat butcher's meat from the shambles. Our Saviour corrected this gross error by telling them, "That it is the spirit that vivifies the flesh availeth nothing."

*Thirdly*—Christ frequently in his discourse made a distinction between eating and drinking, and he distinctly mentioned both. Now if he meant to give his body figuratively only, or by faith, such a distinction should plainly appear superfluous or absurd; for there is no difference between eating a body spiritually and drinking a body spiritually.

*Fourthly*—Christ promised there to give something more excellent than the manna given formerly to the Jews. Now if Christ only gave his body figuratively, or by faith, it is irreconcilable to every principle of faith, reason, and experience, how it could be deemed more excellent than the manna, and so far superior to it; for the manna fell from heaven, was prepared by the hands of Angels, was delicious in itself, agreeable in its flavour, and pleasing to the taste. Mere bread, considered as a figure of the body and blood of Christ, is far, very far from possessing all these advantages.

"Take ye and eat, &c."—Matt. xxvi. v. 26.

These words of our Saviour are as clear as language could make for the real presence. Our adversaries say that they should be taken in a figurative sense. The Catholic Church always held that they should be taken in their obvious and literal sense, and that Christ spoke them in that sense, and meant that they should be taken in that sense; and the Church proves it thus:

*First*.—Christ, when he spoke these words, was making his last will and testament. This is evident from the words of the three Gospels. Now the nature of a will requires that it should be worded in the most clear, formal, and distinct terms that language could furnish. This is so true that no instance could be ever yet found of any intelligent man making a will in tropes, figures, and metaphors; nor any instance found of any man of common sense interpreting a will figuratively. For if any person were left a house or land by will, and if this legacy were expressed in clear and formal terms, would not the legatee have reason to judge him to be a fool or a madman, or something worse, who would oppose or dispute his right by saying that this will, by the words of houses and lands, meant only the picture of houses and lands; and it is on this principle that, by the common law of all civilised nations, the words of all wills should be taken in their literal sense.

*Secondly*.—Our Saviour was then enacting a law, and giving a precept to his disciples, as is evident from his words in St. Luke, chap. xxii. v. 19: "Do this in commemoration of me." Now all laws should be worded with great clearness and perspicuity. Hence no law is ever enacted in tropes and figures.

*Thirdly*.—Our Saviour was instituting a Sacrament. This our adversaries allow. He was proposing to their belief a new article of religion. This likewise is evident. Now all the Sacraments both in the Old and New Testaments, all the tenets of religion, all the articles of belief, are instituted and proposed to us in clear and formal terms, and never in tropes, or figures, or metaphors. For as Sacraments and articles of faith are the foundati-

of all religion, they should be established and proposed to us with great perspicuity, in order to preclude any error in our practice or in our faith.

*Fourthly*—In figurative expressions, when the thing signified is called by the name of the sign, this sign should be obvious and known to every person, either from the nature of the thing itself, or from custom, and mankind should be prepared to understand it so by some previous or subsequent explanation.

This proposition must be clear to any body who will consider it.

For example:—Suppose that I put my hand on this pulpit and say, this is the river Nore; every one here must immediately think that I were guilty of a great untruth, or of a great absurdity; because this pulpit, either by its own nature or by custom, was never known to signify the river Nore. On the other hand, I would not be liable to the imputation of a lie or of an absurdity, if I pointed to that figure beyond and said, that is Jesus Christ, or to the other and said, that is the Blessed Virgin. Now bread could not be the sign of the body of Jesus Christ, either by its own nature or by custom; nor were the Apostles or disciples prepared by any previous or subsequent explanation to think so.

*Fifthly*—Either Christ could not give us his body, really and substantially in the blessed Eucharist, or though he could do it, yet he neither gave it actually or did not mean to give it. If the first be said, then let our adversaries tell us how could he create the world from nothing; how could he hypostatically unite our human nature to his divine nature; how could he change water into wine at Cana; how could he multiply the loaves and fishes

in the desert; how could he work a thousand other stupendous miracles, which appear all to our limited understandings to be equally impossible, or equally incomprehensible?

*Sixthly*—If he could do it, but did not mean to do it, let me ask any man of common sense, what words in the whole compass of language could he make use of, which could more clearly mark his intention of doing it, than when he said, "*This is my body.*"

*Seventhly*—Christ is the sovereign truth and veracity itself. This proposition is self-evident to any one who believes him to be God. It follows hence clearly, that it is incompatible with his nature to tell a lie, or to lead any one into error. Now if the words of Christ, in the institution of the blessed Eucharist, are not to be taken in their obvious and natural sense, but in a figurative sense, he would have declared a palpable untruth, and would have led millions of Christians into a most gross error. For he should be reckoned guilty of falsehood, who makes use of expressions industriously designed and properly calculated to deceive others. Such would be the consequence, if our Saviour, in saying these words, "*This is my body,*" if he meant only to give the figure of his body; for he would speak contrary to his sentiments and to his meaning. He not only would have deceived the Apostles, but the whole Church for 1500 years were led into idolatry by his words. For all the faithful for 1500 years believed in the veracity of Christ's words, that his body and blood were really present in the blessed Eucharist; they adored this body which they believed present: if then Christ's body be not really present in the blessed Eucharist, all the faith-



ful who adored the blessed Eucharist would be guilty of idolatry for 1500 years, and our Saviour would be the author and cause of this idolatry. Now to say or even think that Christ could be capable of all this would be a horrid blasphemy.

St. Paul, 1 Corinthians, chap. xi.—“He that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.” And again, “He will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” Now in the blessed Eucharist, if there be nothing else but the mere figure of the body of the Lord, how could he be guilty of sin, who did not discern the body of the Lord: whereas he should rather judge that the body of the Lord was not there; or how could he be guilty of the body and blood of Christ by eating the blessed Eucharist unworthily, if the Eucharist was merely a figure of the body and blood of Christ? For it would follow then, that any one who did eat the manna or the paschal lamb would be guilty of the body and blood of Christ; for these were figures of the body and blood of Christ.

I do not wish to take up your time unnecessarily by quoting at length the authority of Councils and Holy Fathers on this subject. Did the audience, place, or other circumstances, render it necessary, I could mention two of the four first general Councils, viz. Nice and Ephesus; I could produce a long list of Holy Fathers of the first ages of the Church, who all concur in maintaining and teaching the doctrine of the real presence—such as St. Ignatius, Martyr, St. Justin, St. Ireneus, St. Cyril, St. Optatus, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Chrysostom. From their testimonies and authorities, we may be justly allowed to deduce this

strong argument, that "That doctrine must have first originated from the Apostles, according to the rule of St. Vincent of Lerins, which was believed in all places, at all times, and by all Christians." Now the doctrine of the real presence is certainly such a doctrine, as is evident to every one acquainted with the history of the Church and the documents of antiquity. The more learned among our adversaries are so convinced of this, that they seldom urge against us the authority of Councils and Fathers. What they chiefly depend on at present in denying the real presence is, to insist that it is a mystery incomprehensible, and contrary to reason.

Every Catholic owns that the real presence is a mystery, which was given to our faith to believe and not to our reason to comprehend. Those persons who make these objections against the real presence, believe themselves several mysteries of faith which their reason can no more comprehend. For it certainly is as seemingly repugnant to our reason, and as difficult to comprehend, that One undivided nature should subsist in three Persons really distinct, as the real presence: it is as difficult to comprehend how the same body changes into so many thousand forms, and should rise again on the last day the very same, as to comprehend that the body of our Saviour, should exist sacramentally in many places at the same time: it is as difficult to comprehend how a complete nature should be deprived of its subsistence, and be personified by another nature; as it is to comprehend how the accidents exist without the subject in the blessed Eucharist.

In these and all other mysteries which God has vouchsafed to reveal to us, we must captivate our

understanding to faith, and most certainly hold that an all-wise and powerful God can do a great deal more than our weak and limited understandings can comprehend. If we were reduced to believe only what our understanding comprehended, we should not believe many of the most obvious and natural truths, which still we are sure do really exist. We are sure our souls are united to our bodies, yet no man did ever yet comprehend how this union is effected. We are sure we see different objects with our eyes, yet no man ever comprehended or could explain to others how many objects in all their magnitude and extension could be contained in the eye. If we do not comprehend natural things, how can we expect to comprehend supernatural things, of which we cannot in this life have an adequate idea. Let us then say humbly with St. Augustine—"We must allow that God can do several things which we cannot comprehend; and the best reason we can give for these things is, that he is All-Powerful who does them."

And with St. John Chrysostom—"Let us believe God in every thing: let us never contradict him, though what he says should appear unintelligible to our understandings." This we should do in every thing, but particularly when there is question of the mysteries of our faith. We should not be too curious in examining them, but believe firmly the words of *him* who revealed them. His words cannot deceive us, but our senses may easily deceive us. As he has therefore said, "This is my body; let us not doubt it in the least, but firmly believe it."

Faith therefore is the great requisite, the chief requisite for believing in the real presence; and in a true faith, and in a firm faith, no nation under the

man ever excelled the Roman Catholics of Ireland. Let them add charity to their faith; let them live by a faith working by charity, and no nation ever had fairer hopes of arriving to, and enjoying a happy eternity, which I sincerely wish, both for you and myself, in the name of the Father, &c.

---

### CATECHETICAL CONFERENCES ON THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

#### *What is a sacrifice?*

The word sacrifice, taken in an extended and full sense, signifies all kinds of good works, which we do to honour God, and unite ourselves to him; such as prayer, thanksgiving, contrition, and the like. These are called sacrifices, because they all tend to honour God as the Sovereign Lord of all things, and help to render him favourable to us. But the word sacrifice, taken in a strict and proper sense, signifies an external oblation of a visible and substantial thing, made by a lawful minister, who, in consecrating the thing offered by mysterious ceremonies, destroys it, or otherwise changes it, in acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion over us, and our total dependence on him.

*First*—Sacrifice is called an external offering, to distinguish it from the internal and spiritual offering by which we consecrate our hearts to God. Any external oblation whatsoever will not be acceptable to God, if it be not accompanied by the interior offering of the heart.

*Secondly*—This oblation is made to God alone; because, as God is the author of our being, our first beginning, and our last end, the Sovereign Master of life and death, and as sacrifices were established to

fourthly, Oblation, because it is offered to the Divine Majesty in propitiation for our sins; fifthly, Mystagogy, because it is a great mystery; and lastly, it was called in the Latin Church, as it is called now, Mass.

The word Mass was derived from a Latin word, which signifies to send away or dismiss. It was first made use of, to signify the dismissing the Catechumens and Penitents, after the usual prayers and sermon, and before the sacrifice was begun. In this sense we find it used in the fourth Council of Carthage, where it is said, *Ut Episcopus nullum prohibeat, ingredi Ecclesiam & audire verbum Dei, usque ad Missam Catechumenorum*. The Mass of the Catechumens and Penitents held to the offertory: a little before the offertory began, the Deacons cried out with a loud voice, *Exite Catechumeni, Penitentes & indigni*. The remainder of the Liturgy was called the Mass of the faithful, because they only were entitled to assist at it. These were likewise dismissed by the words, *Ite missa est*.

*Can it be proved that the Eucharist is really and truly a sacrifice of the new-law?*

That the Eucharist is really and truly a sacrifice of the new law can be clearly proved. First, from Christ being a priest, according to the order of Melchisedech; secondly, from the figures and types of the Eucharist in the old law; thirdly, from the prediction of the prophets; fourthly, from several passages of the Testament, or new law; fifthly, from tradition; and sixthly, and lastly, from the Eucharist containing all the conditions requisite for a true sacrifice.

*First—Christ, in the 109th Psalm, is addressed*

in these words: "Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech." And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, tells us that these words were so peculiarly applicable to Christ, that he could with no propriety or justice be called a priest, according to the order of Aaron; especially as Christ was not of the tribe of Levi, from which tribe alone priests were taken, but of the tribe of Judah. Now that it could be proved from these words, that the Eucharist is truly a sacrifice, three things only are required. First, that Christ, as a priest, should offer sacrifice; secondly, that Christ, as a priest, according to the order of Melchisedech, could offer this sacrifice no where but in the Eucharist; thirdly, that Christ, as "a priest for ever," transmitted to the Apostles and their successors this power of offering sacrifice. But these three things can be easily proved from the text.—First, that Christ should offer a sacrifice, is evident from the words of the Apostle: *Omnis Pontifex ad offerendum hostias constituitur*; secondly, Christ could offer this sacrifice no where but in the Eucharist; for a priest, according to the order of Melchisedech, should offer sacrifices according to the ritual of his order—that is, as Melchisedech offered it; in the same manner that a priest according to the order of Aaron should offer sacrifices as Aaron did. Now, Melchisedech offered sacrifices in bread and wine, according to the 14th chapter of Genesis; and, consequently, Christ should offer sacrifices in bread and wine; and if Christ did not offer this sacrifice in the Eucharist, he certainly offered it no where else; for on the Cross he offered his blessed body and blood, and not bread and wine; thirdly, Christ, as a priest for ever, &c.; for a priest for

ever should offer sacrifices for ever; but a priest could not offer sacrifices in bread and wine for ever, except by means of his Apostles and their successors; and, consequently, he should have transmitted to his Apostles and their successors this power of offering sacrifices, as he actually did, when he said to them, "Do this in commemoration of me."

Besides, a priest for ever, should for ever visibly discharge the office of a priest in the Church: but it is evident that Christ now does not discharge visibly the office of a priest in the Church. He must then do it by means of the priests, who visibly sacrifice in his name and in his person; and priests must then or never sacrifice visibly in the person of Christ, when they consecrate the Eucharist in his person; for this is the only action they perform in the person of Christ. In conferring the other sacraments, in praying for the people, in blessing the people, they always act by the power of Christ, and by the authority of Christ; but they perform them all in their own persons, and not in the person of Christ.

*Secondly*—It can be proved from the prophets, (Malachy, chap. i. v. 10 and 11): "I take no longer pleasure in you, says the Lord of Hosts, nor will I receive any present from your hands: for, from the rising to the setting sun, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place a pure oblation is sacrificed and offered in my name." In this text, the prophet foretells three things. First, that God would reject the sacrifices of the old law; secondly, that in the new law a more excellent sacrifice would be substituted in their place; thirdly, that this new sacrifice would be offered up every where. Now these things cannot with any propriety be applied to any thing else but to the sacrifice of the Eucharist, for the pure

oblation of which the prophet speaks, and which was to be offered up in every place, must mean the Eucharistic sacrifice; or it must mean the sacrifice on the Cross, or good works, which are sometimes called spiritual sacrifices. Now the prophet's words cannot be understood of the sacrifice of the Cross, because the oblation mentioned in the text must be offered up every where, and the sacrifice on the Cross was offered up in one place only, in Jerusalem.

Nor of good works. First, because no good works can, according to our adversaries, be called a pure offering; they are all bad and infected; secondly, because the offering here spoken of was to be substituted in the place of the Jewish offerings, which were to be rejected. Now God never did reject, nor never meant to reject, good works performed by any one, whether Jew or Christian, when they proceed from a proper principle; thirdly, because Malachy here contrasts this pure oblation, which could not be contaminated by those who offered it, with the oblations of the Jews, which could be easily contaminated by the malice of the offerers; and, consequently, he could not mean good works; for the good works of Christians may be as easily tainted now by improper motives and principles, as the good works of the Jews were formerly; fourthly, because by this oblation God was to be glorified among the Gentiles, in the same manner that he was treated contemptuously by the Jews: now he was despised and treated ill by the Jews in their external and visible sacrifices: he must then be glorified among the Gentiles by external and visible sacrifices, and not by spiritual sacrifices, which, being internal and invisible, cannot be said to glorify God in the same manner, &c.



*Thirdly*—From the words of the institution—*Cœnantibus autem illis*. It cannot be well denied but Christ offered here a true sacrifice, because all the circumstances necessary for the immolation of a victim concur here: the blessing, the thanksgiving to God, the breaking and dividing of the parts, the mystical separation of the body and blood, abundantly sufficient for a true sacrifice; and lastly, the participation of the victim, which always took place in peace-offering sacrifices. Hence Christ really offered a sacrifice. Now what Christ did then, he ordered his Apostles and successors to do till the end of time, by saying, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Therefore, &c. Again, Christ meant here to offer a real sacrifice, or he meant the sacrifice which he was about soon to offer on the Cross, or he meant only to give to the Apostles bread to eat and wine to drink. Now either of the two last assertions cannot be supported with any appearance of reason. First, he did not mean the sacrifice on the Cross, because it is plain from the words of Christ, that he spoke of an offering that he was at that moment actually making, and not of any other offering which he intended making at any future time; and, consequently, he could not mean his oblation on the Cross, which he did not perform till some time afterwards; secondly, because there is question here of shedding blood by the help of a chalice. Now on the Cross there was no chalice used. *Ergo*, &c.; thirdly, Christ did not mean to give bread, &c.; for such an action could only regard the Apostles alone, for no one else was present. But the oblation made use of by Christ was not confined to the Apostles alone, but was to extend to many others. This is evident from the text,

where we read, "which is shed for ye, and for many others."

*Fourthly*—From the 1 Corinthians, 10. The chalice which we bless, is it not a communication of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not a participation of the body of Christ? For we are one bread and one body all who partake of one and the same bread. Look at Israel, according to the flesh; are not all these who eat the victims partakers of the altar? What then? Do I say, that what "is sacrificed to idols is any thing? Or "that an idol is any thing? But what the Gentiles "sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils. But I do not "wish ye to be sharers with devils: ye cannot drink "the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils: "ye cannot be sharers in the tables of the Lord "and the tables of devils."

The Apostle who compares the Eucharist with the sacrifices of the Jews and Gentiles, and precisely and particularly as these are sacrifices, must look upon the Eucharist to be a sacrifice as much as those are sacrifices. It is evident from the quoted text, that the Apostle did so; for he insists that Christians, by a participation of the Eucharist, or the body of our Lord, become partakers of the victim offered on the altar, or table of the Lord, as the Gentiles, by eating meats offered to idols, become partakers of devils; and as the Jews, by eating their victims, became partakers of the Levitical altar. This is the whole scope of the Apostles' reasoning, which, when simplified, may be reduced justly as follows:—Fly from the worship of idols, and, consequently, from all food offered to these idols; for, as a Jew who eats of the legal victims, let him eat them where he will, participates in the

Jewish altar; and as he who receives the Eucharist participates in the altar of the Lord, so he who, knowingly and willingly, eats meats offered to idols, participates in the altar of devils. *Ergo, &c.*

From Councils. The first Council of Nice, Canon 18, forbids Deacons from presuming to give the communion to priests; for, says the Council, neither rule nor custom has handed down to us, that those who offer the sacrifice should receive the body and blood of Christ from those who have not the power of offering it themselves. It is clear from this canon, that the Council held as certain that the Eucharist was a real sacrifice; for they say that the real body and blood of Christ was offered to God by a lawful minister, and these conditions united truly constitute a real sacrifice.

Council of Ephesus 11.—Declaration: We offer in our Churches a holy, vivifying, and unbloody sacrifice; the body which is laid before us, and likewise the precious blood, believing that they are made the true body and blood of the word, that vivifies all things. Here we have in clear terms expressed the true body of Christ, offered up in an unbloody manner as a sacrifice.

Council of Chalcedon. In this Council the Eucharist was called, without any contradiction, by Ischyrius, Deacon of Alexandria, the tremendous and unbloody sacrifice, which the avarice of Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria, prevented from being offered up and celebrated, on account of his selling corn so excessively dear.

The tenth Council of Toledo. As often as the offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ would be made, so often should it be participated in that true and extraordinary sacrifice; for the Apostle says;

don't those who eat the victims, participate in the altar. It is certain, that those who do not eat when they sacrifice, are guilty of the blood of the Lord. For what kind of sacrifice will that be, in which it is notorious, that the very person who sacrifices does not participate in ? Here a clear and formal mention is made of the Minister who sacrifices, of the victim and offering of the altar on which the victim is offered, of the necessary participation in the sacrifice by the persons who sacrifice: consequently every thing is mentioned that denotes an external and not an internal sacrifice.

The fourth Council of Lateran—The universal Church of the faithful is one, and out of it there is no salvation. In this Church Jesus Christ is, himself, both priest and victim. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar, under the appearances of bread and wine.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem—We pray to God that he would send his holy spirit on the gifts offered him; that he would make the bread the body, and the wine the blood of Christ. Then when the spiritual sacrifice is finished, and when the unbloody worship of the victim of propitiation is over, we pray to God for the common peace of the Church. St. Cyril says, that we have a victim offered on our altars in an unbloody manner, consequently a sacrifice.

St. Chrysostom—Christ substituted himself to be offered in the place of Oxen; and the sacred oblation, whether offered by Peter, Paul, or any other priest whatsoever, is the same which Christ himself gave to his disciples, and which priests now daily offer.

St. Ambrose—Let us priests offer for the people the sacrifice which Christ himself offered at his last supper; and though we are poor in merit, yet we

are entitled to honour, on account of the sacrifice we offer. Because, though Christ does not now offer in a visible manner, yet he is offered on earth, when the body of Christ is offered; nay, it is plain, that he offers in us, as it is his own words, which sanctify the sacrifice that is offered.

From the Liturgies—That an invincible argument here may be derived from the Liturgies of the christian world, it is sufficient, that they all clearly and plainly mention on the altar, is an offering a victim, which is Christ really present, and a sacrifice the great source of thanksgiving. Now, all these are found certainly mentioned in all the Liturgies of the christian world. They are found in the Liturgy or Mass Book of St. Gregory the Great, which Roman Catholics every where use. It is so plain that it needs no proof. They are likewise found in the Liturgies of the Copts or Egyptians, Armenians, Nestorians, and of all the other Eastern Sectaries, &c. fifty in number. Now it must be evident to any impartial and reflecting man, that these Sectaries never borrowed these rites, these words, or this belief, one from the other, because they hate and condemn each other with mutual dislike and animosity; nor did they borrow any thing from us since they left the Church. Therefore all these must have been handed down to us from the Apostles—Acts, chapter 13, v. 2—*Ministrantibus autem illis Domino, & jejunantibus, dixit illis Spiritus sanctus: Segregate mihi Saulum & Barnabam, in opus ad quod assumpsi eos.* The ministry the Apostles were engaged in could be nothing else but saying Mass. For the word *Leitourgonton*, which St. Luke makes use of there, was never used by him in any part of his works to signify any thing else,

but to offer sacrifice. And if the Apostles were not then employed in offering sacrifices, as the words used give plainly to understand; what could they be employed in? It must be certainly either in preaching or in praying; yet neither of these assertions could be supported with any appearance of truth or probability; for the text mentions that they were fasting and leitourgon. And what connexion had fasting and preaching, that they should be mentioned together? Fasting and sacrificing were very proper circumstances to be mentioned together, because the Apostles were practising then what the Church was to practice ever afterwards; that they offered sacrifices fasting; but to mention fasting with preaching, was a circumstance entirely impertinent and irrelevant.

*Secondly*—They were not praying, for the word *Leitourgia* is used no where at all in Scripture to signify praying, and its own etymology can convey no such sense. For the meaning of the word is to perform a public and sacred work; therefore it gives a clear and distinct idea of the Sacrifice of the Mass. But to be still more clear, it is necessary to explain the conduct of God to man; a conduct dictated by infinite wisdom and infinite goodness.

God, by his nature, is sovereign Lord of the universe, and consequently could, by his absolute power, establish his empire and dominion over all created beings. However, in all beings endowed with reason and liberty to receive their voluntary homages rather than their forced respects and obedience, and to engage them more readily to do this, he has heaped on them extraordinary and innumerable favours. This mode of government is more glorious

to God, and more beneficial to man. When man, after mature deliberation, chooses God for his Lord and master, in preference to any other being; when he consecrates and devotes his liberty to God's services, he evinces thereby the great idea he has conceived of the divinity, and gives a splendid proof of God's pre-eminence over all created beings whatsoever.

The first alliance of this kind was made between God and Adam. Adam as the first and the head of the human race contracted this alliance with God, by acknowledging God as his creator and Lord, and by promising him perfect obedience. He soon violated this promise of fidelity, by transgressing the orders of his God. By his disobedience, he separated himself from God, forfeited God's protection, and fell with all his posterity under the tyranny of the devil. We should have for ever lay ingulphed in this abyss of misery, if the son of God had not taken compassion on us, and resolved out of his superabundant goodness to make us emerge from this calamitous state. For this purpose he clothed himself with our human nature. Being then by his dignity the head of the human race, he satisfied them to the justice of God, freed them from the slavery of the devil, and renewed the alliance which had formerly been so shamefully broken by the first man.

*What relation has all this to the sacrifice?*

A very important one. Whenever God contracts an alliance with man, his will is, that there should be lasting memorials of this alliance; and external signs of man's engagements to God, and of God's promises to man. The memorial of our alliance with God is called *Testament* in scripture; the external signs of man's engagement is called *Sacrifice*;

and Sacraments announce the signs made use of by God to pour into our hearts that grace, which is the pledge of the glory promised to us. Hence we offer and consecrate ourselves to God by sacrifices; God grants us his grace and holy Spirit by the sacraments; and both the one and the other contribute to nourish the alliance made between God and man.

And so true is this, that the two celebrated alliances we know to have been made between God and man, the old and new, each had its Testament, its sacrifices, and its sacraments. It should inspire us with a most particular devotion for the blessed and adorable Eucharist, when we consider that it alone answers at once all these different purposes; it is a most authentic Testament; it is our only sacrifice, and it is the most considerable and the most important of all our sacraments. That the blessed Eucharist unites in itself these three different glorious qualities, is evident from Scripture. First—Our Saviour says, Mat. 26, this is my blood of the New Testament; and again by St. Paul, this chalice is the New Testament; again, our Saviour says that it is a sacrifice, Luke 22. This is my body which shall be delivered up to death for ye; and lastly, it is a sacrament or visible sign of the spiritual nourishment of the soul—*Accipete et Comedite*, 1 Corinthians.

If we reflect a little here, we must surely admire the profound wisdom of the Son of God. For could any thing be better calculated to represent all our mysteries, to exalt their dignity, and to procure them the respect of mankind than the blessed Eucharist. A testament is a lasting memorial of God's reconciliation with mankind. And what could better



express this reconciliation, than the union of the divine and human nature in the person of Jesus Christ, really present in the blessed Eucharist. By sacrifice the Church makes a public profession of consecrating herself entirely to the service of God. And what more splendid proof could she give of this, than by offering to God the body and blood of his son, the Church's chief and head?—'Tis by sacraments that God gives us assurances and pledges of the eternal inheritance designed for us. And could he possibly give us a greater or a more marked proof of his design, than by giving the body and blood of his own son for our nourishment. So extraordinary a favour must entirely insure to us, the performance of all his other promises.—What wonders then, and wonders never to be admired enough, are comprised all in the blessed Eucharist? What was the ark formerly, the memorial of the ancient alliance, in comparison of the blessed Eucharist, containing the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ? What were all the animals sacrificed formerly in the temple, in comparison of Jesus Christ, the precious victim offered on our altars? What were all the ancient sacraments of the old law, in comparison of our sacraments, especially the blessed Eucharist? Who can then help crying out, O admirable! O holy! O divine blessed Eucharist, illustrious memorial of our reconciliation with God, precious victim, inestimable sacrament, miraculous abridgment of all God's graces and mercies to mankind, when will you be loved, esteemed, and adored as you ought by thoughtless and ungrateful man?

*Does man derive any great benefit from Mass?*

As all sacrifices were principally established for

God's honour and glory, man should in strict justice pretend to derive no other benefit from Mass. It would be even a great consolation to a soul who truly loved God, that it would be in his power to glorify God, not only so easily, but also in the most excellent manner that God could be glorified on earth. But such is the wisdom, and such is the goodness of God, that he has been graciously pleased to interweave his interests and ours so closely together, that we can never make any efficacious effort to promote his honour and glory, without advancing greatly our own interest at the same time : and even in this very sacrifice, which was principally instituted to honour him, he has, according to St. Augustine, considered our advantages more than his own.

And in truth, the benefits we derive from Mass are so many and so extraordinary, that it is no easy matter to express the number, or to explain the excellence of them all. Heaven and Earth, and Purgatory, God and Angels, christians and infidels, Saints and sinners, have all a share in it. Hence, according to the venerable Bede, a priest, who, without sufficient reason, does not say Mass, deprives the blessed Trinity of the great glory which would be derived from Mass ; deprives the Angels of the great joy they would feel from it ; deprives the just of many graces ; he deprives sinners of the pardon they would receive for their sins ; he deprives the souls in Purgatory of a sure consolation in their sufferings ; he deprives the Church of the great happiness of possessing Jesus Christ ; and he deprives himself of a powerful remedy against all the infirmities of his soul.

*Explain in particular these advantages?*

The first great advantage Mass confers, is to destroy sin. According to the Council of Trent, the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass is the canal, by which the benefits of the sacrifice of the Cross are conveyed into our souls. St. Paul says "that the  
"old man has been crucified with Jesus Christ,  
"in order that the body of sin should be destroyed,  
"and that we should be no longer its slaves." Now the body of sin consists in three things—first, in the sin itself; secondly, in the punishment of sin; and thirdly, in the fatal inclinations we have to sin. Hence, if the end of our Saviour's passion was to destroy sin, and if the benefits of this passion be particularly applied to our souls by means of the Mass, it follows clearly, that Mass will furnish us with most excellent means to remedy the three evils of sin before mentioned. And indeed, nothing we can do will be ever so efficacious to obtain true contrition for our sins, as the sacrifice of the Mass. Hence, let any sinner who has a sincere desire of being converted to God, come to Mass, (especially if that Mass be offered for himself); let him address our Saviour with confidence, and he may depend that our Saviour will speak in his favour, appease the wrath of his father, and obtain for the sinner the precious gift of true repentance. This is what the Council of Trent teaches us from our Saviour's own words. For he said in the 26th of St. Matt. "This chalice contains my blood, which shall be shed for the remission of sins." But it should be remarked here with St. Thomas, that the sacrifice of the Mass does not remit sins in the same manner, that the sacraments of baptism and penance do. These

two sacraments remit sin by the infusion of sanctifying grace. Whereas the sacrifice of the Mass only prepares us for our sanctification, by exciting our souls to a compunction of heart and detestation of sin, by means of actual and preventing graces.

*Secondly*—It destroys the punishment due to sin. For it is an acknowledged truth, that our Saviour communicates to us at Mass, the satisfactions which, when dying on the cross he offered to his father. Hence, the punishment which we justly merited for our sins, are much diminished or entirely forgiven to us, in virtue of the sacrifice of the Mass. And not only the souls of the living enjoy this precious advantage, but the souls in purgatory also feel its beneficial effects. The unanimous consent of the Holy Fathers of all ages, and the authority of the Council of Trent, leave no room at all to doubt of this truth. Hence, it follows as a necessary consequence, that of all the means that can be possibly used to comfort the souls in purgatory and shorten their torments, the most ready and the most infallible means are to offer Masses for them.

*Thirdly*—It destroys the evil inclination we have to sin. And this effect of the Mass is produced in a more particular manner in those who communicate at Mass, either sacramentally or spiritually. It is true, that every supernatural act of contrition will always help to diminish our evil inclinations: it is also true, that one of the effects of the blessed Eucharist, is to destroy these our corrupt inclinations to sin. And it is also true, that the special graces we receive at Mass, will greatly contribute to free us from the tyranny of this domestic enemy. For as

in the sacrifice of the Mass we protest to God, that we wish to serve and love him, his own glory and goodness prompt him to assist us in breaking asunder the bonds that hold us captives to flesh and blood, in order that we may serve him with more liberty, and love him with more perfection. In short, the proper effect of the sacrifice is, to make us die to sin; and we can only die to sin, by gradually losing the corrupt inclinations we have to sin.

*What is the second advantage of the Mass?*

After the death of sin, the life of grace must infallibly succeed in the soul; and a wordly spirit is taken from us with a view of animating us with the spirit of Jesus Christ. God never destroys, but to plant again, God never pulls up but to plant again, God never extinguishes in us the fire of our passions, without kindling in us the fire of his charity. If by means of the sacrifice he banishes the devil's reign over us, it is in order to establish in our hearts the kingdom of God alone. And indeed, as the sacrifice of the Mass is a public acknowledgment of our alliance with God and of our wishes that he should have full possession of our hearts, all the graces we receive thereby should naturally tend to strengthen God's reign within us, and to procure for him the full, entire and peaceable possession of our hearts: 'Tis for these noble ends, that we endeavour to exterminate sin, God's capital enemy; it is for these ends that we endeavour to mortify and weaken our passions, because they are constantly threatening to revolt, and are constantly conspiring with the devil to excite us to a rebellion against God. 'Tis for these ends, that we consecrate during Mass our liberty to god; that he may

dispose of us as he pleases, according to the designs of his wisdom, justice, and mercy. And when the divine fire consumes all that is human in our souls, it is then, and then alone, we begin to lead a life truly divine.

*What is the third advantage of the Mass?*

It greatly contributes to procure the special protection of God for those who assist often and devoutly at Mass. Princes of this world make it a point of honour to secure their faithful subjects from the violence of their enemies. And surely it cannot be doubted, but God protects and assists in a special manner such of his faithful subjects as come daily to him, in order to pay him their homage, and to renew their vow of allegiance to him at the foot of his altar; of this special protection no doubt can be entertained by a Catholic, after the precise and formal declaration of the Council of Trent, in session 22. "This sacrifice obtains for us, not only the gift of penance, but procures likewise for us, the succour we want in the different junctures of our lives."

Many instances could be adduced from ecclesiastical history, of wonderful succours and protection granted by providence to those who daily attend at Mass with devotion. P. Pius II. enumerates some examples which he himself was witness of. Among others he mentions a gentleman of his acquaintance, who was delivered from a dreadful temptation, under which he laboured for some time, by frequenting Mass daily as he was advised. Historians mention several miraculous escapes from thunder, lightning, and other dangers, which several at different times experienced, and attributed these escapes to a special protection of

providence watching over those persons, because they daily heard Mass with devotion.

*Are there any other advantages to be derived from it?*

Yes, there is another advantage to be derived from Mass, which is more considerable and more extensive than any that was yet mentioned. This advantage is the efficacy which Mass communicates to our prayers, in order to obtain from God what we pray for, provided that what we pray for, will contribute any way to our salvation. According to St. Paul, Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, and offers sacrifices to his Father to obtain eternal blessings, and to procure the means that lead to them. To comprehend fully the force of our present reasoning, we should consider that a valuable present seasonably made, and backed by the recommendation of illustrious personages, seldom fails to produce the desired effect. Now, when we are praying to God, what present can we offer him more valuable or more to his liking, than the precious victim on our altars. What moment can be more favourable to us, than the moment in which he looks on this victim with infinite joy and satisfaction? If at this propitious moment Jesus Christ and his Saints came to join their requests to ours, could God refuse us any thing we asked that would conduce to our salvation? Scripture remarks that good works joined with prayer, makes prayer more efficacious; "Your prayers joined to alms, have mounted to the throne of God and have been heard," said the angel to Tobias. And our Saviour himself has declared that there are some devils, that cannot be cast out but by prayer and fasting. Now, if to prayer and fasting we join the sacrifice of the

Mass, our prayers will certainly be much more efficacious. For the sacrifice of the Mass will be ever more acceptable to God than prayers or alms can be.

It is a truth admitted by all, that the circumstance of time and place contribute greatly to the success of our petitions. Hence, it is a point of no small importance to watch well the favourable moment, when the person we address is well disposed, either from the honours he receives or the pleasure he feels, to communicate favours to others. Now, it is impossible to explain how much the sacrifice of the Mass calms the wrath of God, justly irritated against sinners; it is impossible to explain fully what pleasure, what satisfaction he takes in viewing his beloved son offered on our altars. St. Chrysostom says, that this moment is the most favourable in the world to enter into a negotiation with God; that the angels make use of this moment as the most favourable for redoubling their prayers to God in our behalf. He adds, "that many troops of those celestial spirits assist at the sacrifice of the Mass, bowing down, with the greatest respect, before the divine majesty. As soon as Mass is finished, they fly off like celestial messengers, to unbar the gates of purgatory and deliver some happy soul; or to execute something else, which God has been pleased to do on account of the merits of his son and the prayers of the faithful."

If then, the Angels and Saints take so deep an interest in our concerns; if Jesus Christ himself is not satisfied with barely offering up himself as a sacrifice for us, but becomes also our mediator and advocate; if he shews his wounds to his Father, which like so many dumb, but eloquent mouths cry out



loudly for us, as some of our greatest and most pious divines think, what could the Father of Mercies refuse to petitions backed and seconded in so powerful a manner? Nothing undoubtedly that could be granted. 'Twas this consideration that made a Saint of the last century cry out, "How devoutly it is to be wished that we all knew the full value of the precious treasure we have among us." Happy, and truly happy would Christians be, if they knew how to avail themselves, as they ought, of the many advantages they possess in this adorable sacrifice: for it is an inexhaustible source of all sorts of graces, of all kinds of spiritual and temporal riches—riches for the body, riches for the soul, riches for time, riches for eternity. But, alas! how few Christians profit, as they ought, of this great treasure! How few even would take the trouble of reaching out their hands, and taking any part of this treasure, which God has so liberally bestowed on them for their use.

*Who are these who share in the benefits of the Mass?*

Every one may participate in the benefits of the Mass, but every one does not benefit in the same manner. To comprehend this we must carefully distinguish these three things:—First, to offer a sacrifice for any one; secondly, to offer a sacrifice in the name of any one; and thirdly, to offer up a person's self in sacrifice.

To offer a sacrifice for any one is the same thing as to say Mass for him, or to hear Mass for him, in order to obtain from God some particular favour, benefit, or blessing for him. In this sense the sacrifice can be offered for any one either in the Church or out of the Church; because it is a duty of charity to pray for the whole world; and by offering the

sacrifice in this manner, is doing no more than praying and adding the sacrifice to our prayers, in order to render them more efficacious,

To offer a sacrifice in the name of any one, is to offer a visible victim to God, in order to testify that the offerer is a subject of God's; that he adores God, and acknowledges no other master but God, To offer a sacrifice in this manner, a person must be of the faithful; because it is certain that our Saviour left to his Church, and to his Church alone, his body to be offered as a victim.

Lastly, he offers himself as a sacrifice, who offers up the Mass in union with the priest, and sacrifices himself by interior acts of love and attachment to God's service. This is a most excellent method of assisting at Mass. But no one should presume to do this, except a Catholic, who can rationally hope that he is in the state of sanctifying grace; for a Catholic who is offered up to God as a victim, should be well purified from sin by penitential tears, and should be a living member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ.

To conclude, we say, that though all the world may have some share in the sacrifice of the Mass, yet there are some graces derived from it, which none but the faithful can pretend to. And even among the faithful, these graces are more liberally poured forth on some than on others; for though our Saviour distributes at this sacrifice the graces which he has merited by his passion, yet he always distributes them according to weight and measure. His merits are undoubtedly infinite; but they are distributed to every one according to the rules of unerring wisdom. Hence it may be averred with truth, that we receive these graces, in greater or

less abundance, in proportion to the dispositions we have when we assist at the adorable sacrifice.—Hence it is evident how careful we should be to hear Mass as we ought.

*Explain the best manner of assisting at Mass.*

The first thing to be done is to come to the Church in a decent manner, and to appear there in such a manner that God may look on us with pleasure, or at least with compassion. If we were going to speak to a great man, we would endeavour to arrange our whole exterior in such a manner as neither to shock nor disgust him. We would put on a decent garb, and assume a composed air, mixed with gravity and respect, especially if we went to petition him for any favour. Act in the same manner in going to Mass, and while you assist at Mass; for you come there to appear before the King of kings, to pay him your homage and respects, to petition for favours, and to implore his mercy.

This exterior respect and decency is doubtless necessary, but it is not sufficient. God, who sees our heart and our interior, desires to see nothing there that could disgust or offend him. The exterior attitudes of decency and respect should be always accompanied with an interior purity of conscience, or at least with a sincere desire on our sides of being purified from all sin. Hence before Mass begins, we should make the most fervent acts of contrition in our power for all our sins, not only for our great and grievous sins, but also for the smallest venial sin we are conscious of. Besides, take particular care that no posture you use be contrary to humility, or any dress you wear be contrary to modesty. On these preparatory dispositions will greatly depend the quantity of grace you

will receive either by the Mass, or by the prayers you will say at Mass.

*Which is the second general method?*

The second thing to be done is to assist at Mass with great attention. It will not avail us much to assist there without a conscience free from grievous sins, and with an interior and an exterior composed and respectful; but it is further required that we assist with great attention to the awful mysteries that are celebrated before us. It would greatly help us to have this attention, if we had a good knowledge of all the actions that constitute the sacrifice of the Mass.

This attention likewise would be greatly promoted, if, before we go to Mass, we would endeavour to divest our minds of worldly thoughts and cares, and to keep our interior recollection; for to come to the Chapel with a mind embarrassed with worldly cares, and to expect to have interior recollection immediately when you come before the altar, is either a gross error or a foolish presumption. If we do not, therefore, endeavour to be recollected before we enter the Chapel, we may naturally expect to have but little attention during Mass; and surely it is useless, if not criminal, to have our bodies only at Mass, while our minds are wandering far away from it.

I am well aware, that in spite of all the precautions we can use, our imaginations will often run away with us from both Mass and prayers; but such distractions being involuntary both in themselves and in their cause, are entirely faultless, and diminish in no measure the merit of our prayers. On the contrary, such involuntary distractions may acci-

dentally produce some useful thoughts and acts of humility, by convincing us, and by obliging us to acknowledge that we are weak and miserable, and very little masters of ourselves or of the powers of our souls.

Besides this recollection in coming to the Chapel, it is also very necessary to watch your eyes, your tongue, and your ears, while in the Chapel; for it is morally impossible that due attention at Mass can be preserved by a person who speaks to one, salutes another, and looks round on all. The most pious persons cannot always captivate their volatile imaginations; and can you expect, after gazing all around on many different objects, to fix steadily your imagination whenever you please. You will be grievously disappointed if you think so. You should rather consider, that by employing yourself thus, you will be guilty in the cause of all the distractions that follow; and that if these distractions continue the greater part of Mass, you do not then comply with the obligation of hearing Mass.

*Which is the third thing to be done?*

We should propose always some particular end to ourselves in hearing Mass, and offer it up then in union with the priest. By directing or regulating our intention in hearing Mass, we will thereby avoid a fault too common in the world, of going to Mass through habit, custom, or human respect. We will go there then, purely to comply with our duty, to honour God, to pay him our homage, to obtain the remission of our sins, and grace to conquer all temptations, to discharge the duties of our state, to obtain the different virtues we pray for. The regulating and directing our intention in this manner is

highly useful, in order to derive from Mass all the benefits we ought to receive from so holy an action.

*Secondly*—We should offer Mass in union with the priest. To explain this offering, it is necessary to remark, that there are two kinds of sacrifices or offerings. The one external, and obvious to the senses. This consists of all the actions the priest performs at Mass. The other is interior, invisible, and perceived by God alone. Now, no one but a person ordained priest, can mount on our altars, change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and perform all the other external actions of the sacrifice. But all the faithful can interiorly offer the body of Christ, and at the same time offer themselves as a holocaust to the eternal Father.

*Which is the fourth thing?*

To make always a spiritual communion at Mass. A spiritual communion is doubtless less efficacious than a sacramental communion; yet the advantages to be derived from a spiritual communion are so considerable, that we can never omit it, without considerable prejudice to our souls. By the sacrifice of the Mass, we restore to God what we have received from his liberality; but by the communion, both sacramental and spiritual, God sheds his graces into our hearts with such profusion, that there can scarcely be any other action at the Mass more profitable.

And to abstract a moment from any interested views of our own on great advantages in such an action, would it not be just, reasonable, and grateful, that we should correspond, as much as in us lies, with our Saviour's loving eagerness to be

united with us? Our Saviour, by concealing himself under the sacramental species, and by working many miracles at once, proves clearly to us, that he ardently desires to come to us. Should we not then on our part prepare our hearts for him, and ardently desire to be united with him?

I must make one remark here, which may not perhaps be useless. It is a controverted point among the divines, whether a man, who thinks himself in mortal sin, could with any propriety make a spiritual communion. Now it appears to me to be the more probable opinion, that he could in such a state make a spiritual communion, provided he qualified this desire with a sufficient restriction. For instance: my Saviour, I eagerly wish to be united to you, if my soul were in a proper disposition to do so.

*Is it a great sin to behave immodestly or improperly at Mass?*

Few Catholics, who have any sense at all of religion left, but would reply without any hesitation, that such a conduct at Mass is highly culpable, and utterly inexcusable. Every Catholic is under a strict obligation of paying due veneration and respect to this august and adorable mystery; and to violate so strict an obligation is always a grievous fault. In the writings of the Holy Fathers we frequently find dreadful anathemas launched against such profanations.

St. Chrysostom, perceiving some persons who behaved improperly at Mass, addressed them as follows:—"You are here in the company of Angels, to sing with them the praises of God, and you presume to keep standing, laughing, and talking. I am astonished that you are not blasted at once by lightning from heaven; and that we, who tamely bear with

you, are not hurled to destruction by the same vindictive bolt; for no one ever more justly deserved punishment. The Lord of Hosts is here personally present: he is employed in carefully enumerating his subjects and reviewing his troops; and you have the unparalleled effrontery of laughing in his face, and you look upon this insolent conduct as a trifle not worth minding or amending. But it is lost time to make reproaches or reprehensions to such abandoned men. It would be a great deal better to turn them at once out of the Church, as scandalous and profane wretches, than to tolerate any longer such pernicious examples; especially as there cannot be the smallest hopes entertained of their conversion: for persons who laugh and fool at a time and in a place when and where they should be seized with a sacred awe, will hardly ever be truly converted."

If any Catholic here should be inclined to think that the Saint spoke with great severity, will not that Catholic, at least, acknowledge, that those persons are extremely culpable and highly criminal, who profane these tremendous mysteries by their scandalous behaviour and improper conduct during the time of Mass. A dissipated air, gazing looks, and an insolent negligence, announce immediately these profaners of our temples and these scandals of our religion. They do not come here, like the Blessed Virgin or St. John, to assist at the sacrifice, with a devout grief. No: they come like the enemies and crucifiers of our Saviour, to renew the same insults to their God, to perpetrate the crime, and to participate in the punishment of these unhappy wretches.

*Is it advisable to go every day to Mass?*

Every one who would wish to live like a true Chris-



tian, should never fail to hear Mass every day, if he could. A physical or moral impossibility of hearing Mass can only justify him; and a neglect of this duty is a sure mark of either a want of faith, or a want of zeal for our salvation. And indeed no other proof would be wanted to an instructed mind, to convince him of the degeneracy of men's faith, and the corruption of their morals, but to hear that the generality of Catholics count it either lost time or an useless work to go daily to Mass, and sneer at those who persevere in so commendable a practice; whereas a small portion of faith and piety would convince them that no practice whatsoever would more surely draw down the blessings of the Most High on themselves and families, than the constant practice of daily paying their homage to that Sovereign Lord from whom all good gifts flow, and on whom all good and blessings depend. And indeed it can never be sufficiently deplored, that the immense advantages to be derived from Mass, cannot influence mankind to come without obliging God to have recourse to threats, in order to compel them to practice a work so useful to themselves. If a favourable occasion of increasing our temporal fortune presented itself, would mankind wait to be commanded to avail themselves of it? And how often have we deprived ourselves of the spiritual blessings we could receive at Mass, because at such times we were not bound in strict rigour to hear Mass? Is it surprising then, that such people profit but little by Mass on Sundays and holidays? Our heart is the vessel into which God pours his liberal donations. Fear shuts this vessel, but love opens it. Whoever then wishes to receive the gifts of heaven in great abundance, let love and not fear

govern his heart. Now a person who could conveniently hear Mass every day, and hears it only on Sundays and holidays, may be justly presumed to act rather as a slave than a loving child—to be influenced rather by fear than by love.

*Why should we expect such great advantages from hearing Mass?*

We will easily comprehend the great advantages which may be derived from Mass, if we reflect that the sacrifice of the Mass is the representation of the sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered to his Father on Mount Calvary; but is at the same time a representation which contains the thing itself which it represents. For first, the sacrifice of the Mass is offered by the same priest that offered the sacrifice on Mount Calvary—that is, by Jesus Christ himself. 'Tis he that sacrifices invisibly, while the priest sacrifices visibly; priests are only his instruments. Secondly, it is the same victim that is offered—that is, the true body and blood of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, it is offered now to the same being and for the same ends that the sacrifice was offered then—that is, it is offered to God, in order to honour God, to satisfy his divine justice, to thank him for the graces we have hitherto received from him, and to petition for future graces. Lastly, we derive the same benefits from both the sacrifices, because the price of the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the Cross, is applied to us by the sacrifice of the Mass. As on account of all these reasons, Mass is justly esteemed the most holy, the most august, and the most venerable of all the actions of religion, so, likewise, there is no action of religion from which we can reap so much benefit as from Mass. Hence the obvious conclusion of this reasoning is, that we ought to

assist at Mass with all the awful respect which the Majesty of God present commands, and with all the earnest attention which our own self interest prompts and requires. We should endeavour to form in our hearts the same dispositions which the blessed mother and the beloved disciple had when they assisted at the sacrifice on Mount Calvary; or at least we should endeavour to excite in ourselves the same sentiments which we would have had, if we had been actually present at that sacrifice.

*What should a person do to fill his heart with these, or some other good sentiments at Mass?*

I suppose a man at present coming to Mass with a proper intention, and filled as he ought with proper recollection. To such a man I address myself and say:—As soon as you enter the Chapel make an act of faith, and profess thereby that you enter into a place filled with the majesty of God, and sanctified by the presence of Jesus Christ; that you came there to pay your homage and respects, and to petition for the graces you want. Remain during Mass in a respectful attitude and posture, whether you stand or kneel, according to the different circumstances of the Mass. Avoid every thing, and every place, that may occasion distractions to you; and, consequently, avoid those places where many come to *see*, and to be *seen*—to admire, and to be admired. Such sacrilegious profaners come to Mass with an intention of erecting altar against altar, and of erecting in some sense idols in the temple of the living God. Do not be witness, if you can, to such horrid profanations. Retire into some corner, where you may be more recollected, but at the same time where you can see all the actions of the priest during Mass.

*Were sacrifices necessary at all times?*

First: it is certain that they were offered at all times since the beginning of the world. We know from Scripture that Cain and Abel offered to God the fruits of the earth and animals, (Gen. iv.); and that Noah, when he quitted the ark, built an altar, took some pure victims, and offered them to God as an holocaust on that altar. We know likewise that Abraham and the other holy men, who lived before Moses' time, offered sacrifices. Hence it is concluded that it was God himself who instructed mankind to adore him by sacrifices. And justly, for religion is necessary to man, and a sacrifice is necessary to religion. Religion is a worship which unites us to God by a perfect subjection of ourselves to the Supreme Being, and by referring to his honour and glory all that we are, and all we do. This indispensable duty is particularly complied with by a sacrifice, because a sacrifice is an oblation made to God, to acknowledge his supreme dominion over all creatures, and their total dependance on him.

This oblation ought to be internally made, because, as God is a Spirit, it is necessary that those who adore him should adore him in spirit and in truth. But as man is composed of a body and soul, he should also make this oblation externally and visibly; for man should give visible and public marks of the disposition of his heart to the Supreme Majesty; and, consequently, should to the interior join an exterior sacrifice—that is, he should give some exterior marks of his interior, by offering himself to God as his creator and preserver.

Religion cannot, therefore, exist without this interior and exterior sacrifice; because religion prin-

cipally consists in uniting mankind together, in the external marks which they ought to shew to God of their love for him, and of their dependence on him.

*What are the ends for which Sacrifices were offered?*

An exterior sacrifice consists in offering to God an exterior and visible thing, in order to be destroyed or to undergo some change or alteration ; and this is done for four reasons, which are the four great ends of the sacrifice.

The first—To acknowledge God's supreme dominion over all created beings. The second is, to thank him for all his favours and blessings. The third is, to ask pardon for sins, and to signify what we owe to his divine justice. The fourth is, to ask all the necessary assistance we stand in need of.

The destruction or alteration of the thing offered, represents perfectly two of the ends of sacrifice, which are to honour God and his supreme dominion, and to acknowledge to him all that we have justly deserved for our sins: for man wishes to signify by this destruction or alteration, that God is the absolute master of all creatures, and that he has no need of any creature ; because those very creatures we offer to him are destroyed. Secondly, by this destruction or alteration man wishes to signify, that being a sinner he deserved death on account of his crimes, and that the victim is substituted in his place. It was for this last reason, that those who offered sacrifices, always put their hands on the head of the victim.

Man is also bound to thank God for his favours, and to implore him for new ones. To comply with these duties the law established different kinds of

sacrifices, such as the holocaust, the victim for sin, and the peace offerings.

The holocaust consisted in burning the entire victim, without giving any share of it to any person whatsoever. They wished by this entire consumption to pay an absolute homage to the supreme dominion of God.

The victim for sin was often joined with the holocaust. This victim was divided into three parts: one was burnt on the altar of the holocaust; a second part was burnt outside the camp; and the third part was eaten by the priests.

The peace-offerings differed in nothing else from the victims for sin, but that the people and priests were both joined in eating part of the victim, and that the peace-offerings were generally offered to thank God for past favours, and to petition for new ones.

Though all these sacrifices were ordained and appointed by God himself, yet they were visible signs incapable of themselves to please God. Their virtue and efficacy depended on the faith of those who offered them; and these offerers had always in view the divine victim—the lamb without blemish, who effaces the sins of mankind, and who was immolated since the beginning of the world.

When these sacrifices were offered by men of a strong and lively faith, such as Abel, Abraham, and others who lived in ardent expectation of the Messias, these sacrifices were then agreeable to God, and, according to Scripture, were received by him as precious perfumes. But when the priests confined their thoughts merely to the sacrifice, and went no further than the mere exterior; and when both priests and people separated from the sacrifice, its

true spirit, which constituted all the merit of the sacrifice, then, indeed, all their holocausts became disagreeable to God. For let the priests take all possible pains to choose animals without blemish; yet all these were still empty and inanimate figures, for they did not sufficiently reflect on, nor pay sufficient attention to, the necessity of choosing victims without blemish. If they did, they would easily see that all this was meant to announce the coming of him who was to be immolated for mankind, and who was alone free from all spot or stain of sin.

After the prophets ceased to appear among the Jews, the spirit which should animate all their ceremonies of religion, diminished daily, and was insensibly lost. Hence, irreligion and stupidity were arrived to the highest pitch, immediately before the coming of the Messias; and, in fact, what good could be expected from the Pharisees, who minded nothing but the mere exterior of religion, the mere letter of the law? Or what could be expected from the Saducees who domineered in the temple, who presided at the sacrifices, and still did not believe in the resurrection of bodies. It was then the time, according to the Royal Prophet, that all the figures should cease, and that God should reject the sacrifices, which till then were offered in the temple of Jerusalem alone. Hence, the necessity of a new sacrifice, which was to be offered up to God in spirit, as our Saviour announced to the Samaritan woman. The truth of all the ancient figures, Jesus Christ, son of the living God, came to offer himself to his Father, and to supply the imperfection of all the ancient sacrifices. For, as St. Augustine says, finding nothing in the world pure enough to be offered to God, he came and offered himself. And

it was by this offering, which will be permanent and eternal, that he has sanctified mankind. Then the figure of all the sacrifices of Aaron was fulfilled ; then all the other sacrifices, which were necessarily multiplied on account of their great imperfection, should vanish and disappear, and leave our great sacrifice in their stead. The faithful are thereby necessitated to have recourse to the true and only sacrifice of our divine mediator, who alone expiates the sins of the world.

We find in him who offers this sacrifice all that can be wished for or esteemed, for in all the ancient sacrifices, viz. God to whom it is offered ; a priest who offers it, and the victim which is offered. He is now both priest and victim on our altars, as he was once both priest and victim on the cross. Those who put him to death were his crucifiers and not his sacrificers ; and as he is priest, according to the order of Melchisedech, bread and wine should be the matter of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and be changed into his body and blood, in order to become the true and real nourishment of the faithful. They are hereby intimately united with him, and offered also with him in sacrifice.

*Lastly*—The divine victim of the adorable sacrifice fulfils all the conditions required in the victims of the old law in all their most perfect sacrifices.

Four conditions were required. First—Accepting the victim by the priest ; second, offering it to God ; third, the destruction or alteration of the victim ; fourth, the consumption or communion of the victim.

The victim should be accepted by the priest : God had so ordered it, and pointed out to the priests what victims to accept and what to reject. The



priests of the new law accept the bread and wine according to the orders of the Eternal Father, who declared his son a priest for *ever*, according to the order of Melchisidech, and consequently offering bread and wine.

*Secondly*—The priests of the old law offered their victims to God, the priests of the new law do the same.

*Thirdly*—In the holocausts and the sacrifices for sins, the victim was offered and changed, and consequently its state or condition was altered. In our sacrifice the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He is immolated, and as it were, in the state of death on our altars; because he is there deprived of the functions of the natural life, which he had on earth; and because he is there with the signs of death on him by the mystical separation of his body from his blood.

*Fourthly*—The consumption of the victim is necessary: if a holocaust was offered, the entire was burnt in honour of God. In the other sacrifices, part of the victim was burnt for God, and the rest of it was divided between the priests and the persons who presented the victim. But in our sacrifices, the victim is entirely for God, and entirely consumed by those who offer it. It is given to all without any division, and consumed in all, without still ceasing to exist as before.

*Lastly*—This sacrifice contains all the truths of the figurative sacrifices. *First*—It is a holocaust by the destruction of the bread and wine. As in all holocausts, the material fire consumed the victim with the bread and liquors, in order to acknowledge God's supreme dominion over his creatures; so in this sacrifice, the fire of the Holy Ghost, which the Church

invokes for that purpose, in some sense consumes the bread and wine, by changing them into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, who thereby pays to God the infinite homage which he deserves.

*Secondly*—It is a propitiatory sacrifice for sin ; for Jesus Christ is the victim that expiates the sins of the world.

*Thirdly*—It contains by way of excellence all the sacrifices of pacific victims, destined to obtain favours from God, for it contains Jesus Christ, the true pacific victim, by whom and in whom we ask and obtain all favours.

*Fourthly*—It is a sacrifice of thanksgiving, because Jesus Christ, in instituting it, gave thanks to his father for all the gifts bestowed on the Church ; and because by it we return thanks to God, worthy of God, by offering up to him his own son, for this son is the most excellent gift that God could bestow on us, and the most excellent return we could make for all his favours. Hence we can most justly conclude by saying, that the sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and of the Church ; that it is the only external sacrifice that can be offered to God ; that it is the true and only sacrifice, that by excellence and pre-eminence contains and comprises all other sacrifices ; that it is the only sacrifice that expiates sin ; that it is the only sacrifice that merits grace for us ; and the only sacrifice that will be continued to the end of the world.

*How should we prepare for Mass ?*

The Holy Ghost recommends to us to prepare our soul for prayer, and as no prayer can be more excellent than that which renders Jesus Christ present on our altars, and makes us partake in his adora-

ble sacrifice, hence no prayer requires such preparation as the sacrifice of the Mass.

The first and best preparation consists in leading a truly christian life.

The second is, either to have or to excite in ourselves a great desire of assisting at this sacrifice. The true Israelites when absent from Jerusalem, consoled themselves with the hopes of happily seeing once more their temple and its altars; yet, the respectability and value of their altars principally consisted in their being figures of our altars. Surely, then, all christians should eagerly desire, and earnestly long, to enter their temples, and assist at their altars, where their God and their Redeemer is really present and truly offered in sacrifice.

The third way is, to have true contrition for our sins, to conceive a strong idea of our unworthiness, to approach the house of God and the tabernacle of the Lord; for if in the Old Law, God desired the Jews to tremble before his Sanctuary, what respectful awe should we not have, when we enter our temples, where is offered the great sacrifice of heaven and earth, the body and blood of a God made man.

The fourth is, to dispose ourselves so, as to be able to offer ourselves up at the sacrifice, and thus to enter into the spirit of the sacrifices of Jesus Christ and of the Church. We should beg of God, that like true holocausts the divine fire should consume every thing that is earthly or carnal in us, and which could not be offered up with Jesus Christ; and that, not only our souls, but our bodies also, should be purified with this divine fire, in order that both may be offered up in a proper manner.

And lastly, though we had not all these neces-

sary dispositions, which christians should have, and should wish to have, we should not despair : On the contrary, we should still approach, with an humble confidence, to the foot of the altar, and there beg and hope for mercy from the source of all graces.

I cannot well conclude these observations, without adding a few words about the greatness, excellence and importance of the Mass ; for indeed nothing in religion can be greater ; all the other sacraments, and most of the offices of the Church, and all the ceremonies, are in general only so many means or preparations to celebrate it worthily, or to partake of it devoutly. 'Tis there that Jesus Christ offers himself for us to his Father ; he there, as an eternal priest, renews daily the oblation he once made on the Cross, and gives himself to the faithful as their true food and nourishment. Fed and nourished by God himself, they find in him the consummation of a spiritual life. Hence, we may in some sense say, that the sacrifice of the Mass changes our Churches into Heaven ; because the divine lamb is there immolated and adored, as St. John represents him in the celestial Sanctuary. The angels fully instructed on what passes at our altars, assist there with the most awful respect.

We have the authority of St. Chrysostom to assert, that this happens, and has been seen by the pious ; and the same Saint adds, that among others he saw them himself.

And in fact, what do we in our Churches, but what the angels do in heaven ? In our Churches we adore the Holy Lamb immolated in the hands of the priests ; and the angels in Heaven adore the same spotless Lamb, who is represented by St. John

to be there immolated, but standing—that is, immolated, and enjoying at the same time a glorious life. All the prayers and all the merits of the Saints in Heaven raise themselves up like a sweet perfume before the throne of God. This, St. John in the Apocalypse expresses by an angel holding a censor in his hands, and by an altar, where the prayers of the Saints are carried or raised before the throne of God. In like manner the Church here below offers incense to God on our altars, as a sign of the prayers and adorations of all the Saints in heaven and on earth—all then unanimously, both in heaven and on earth, join in this august offering.

*Are the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass the same now that they were at the beginning?*

Every thing essential both in the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass has come down to us from Jesus Christ. The Apostles and some Apostolical men added some prayers and ceremonies, as suited best with times of persecution. It would be dangerous then that our worship had any resemblance to the worship of the Jews or Gentiles.—Hence the ritual of our worship could not be safely fixed, till christianity should mount the throne, and become the religion of Kings and Emperors. And consequently, the prayers and ceremonies were fewer in number then, than they are now. Such as were in force, were strictly enforced and punctually complied with; this we find from St. Paul, St. Justin, and St. Cyprian. But as soon as the Church enjoyed peace, and the Emperors became christians, magnificent Churches were consecrated to the worship of God, and divine service was performed in them with great solemnity. This solemnity necessarily required a greater augmentation of prayers

and ceremonies. In the East, St. Basil and St. Chrysostom were particularly active and diligent in this employment, and composed forms of prayers that were to be used at Mass. The liturgies which they then added were called after their names, and are made use of by the Greeks to this day. It was for the same reason too, that the liturgy of Milan was called the Ambrosian liturgy, from St. Ambrose, who composed some prayers for it. In the western Church several learned and pious men applied themselves to compose some prayers and prefaces; but the Councils of Carthage and Milan absolutely forbid that any such should be made use of, till they were approved of by the Bishop.

---

*On the Effects of the Blessed Eucharist,  
continued.*

“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath life everlasting.”—John, chap. vi.

JESUS CHRIST, the sovereign pastor of our souls, was not satisfied in coming down from heaven to seek his strayed sheep, to take on himself their sins and their infirmities, and to submit to the ignominious death of the Cross for their sakes. No; his love, which can be limited to no bounds, nor confined to any measure, has, by an extraordinary expedient, contrived to nourish his flock with his own adorable body and precious blood. By this contrivance, which could be only conceived and executed by a God of infinite love and power, he conveys into our hearts his own virtues, inclinations, and dispositions; he changes us into himself, and he transforms our flesh into his flesh. Hence,

according to the Apostle, 'tis not we that any longer live, 'tis he that lives in us. All these wonders he performs every day by the blessed Eucharist. Can there be any subject, therefore, on which we could speak frequently with more propriety, than to explain to you the wonderful effects of this adorable mystery, and the dispositions required on your part to profit as ye ought by its admirable effects?

Jesus Christ instituted the blessed Eucharist under the symbols of bread and wine. Doubtless he could give us his body and blood numberless other ways; but he has chosen this way, according to the Holy Fathers, as the fittest to signify to us the dispositions we should have to receive it properly, and the effects it should produce in our souls. The analogy is striking, and claims our attention:—First, the bread and wine entering into our bodies incorporate us in them, and make one and the same substance with them. Secondly, they give and preserve both health and life: for our bodies, in their original frame, carry along with them a principle of destruction, and this principle would destroy the body effectually and soon, if food and nourishment did not counteract its effects. This nourishment, distributed through the body, communicates motion through all its parts, and thereby preserves both health and life. Thirdly, food increases our strength and vigour: for both these would soon be diminished, and would quickly die away, if not frequently renewed by nourishment. These are the effects produced by food in the body; and these are likewise the effects produced by the blessed Eucharist in our souls, when we receive it in a proper manner.

*First*—This Holy Sacrament unites us most

closely, and incorporates us entirely with Jesus Christ. We become one and the same thing with him, both by the communication of his spirit and the participation of his body and blood. "He that eats my body and drinks my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him," (John, vi. 57): for can any union be conceived more complete or more perfect than to dwell in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to dwell in us. And what is still more extraordinary, he does not merely dwell in us, but he lives in us and we in him. For he adds immediately after, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he who eats me shall live by me."—The Father from eternity communicated his own life to the Son, and sending this Son by incarnation into the world, and uniting him to flesh and blood, he communicates this divine life to the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ. Hence the faithful Christian, in receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ, becomes a partaker of the divine nature in its life, its sentiments, its dispositions and inclinations, and should live no longer but in Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ.

This is the true, the natural, and the obvious explanation of the words of our Saviour. We can, therefore, assert, with justice and precision, that a Christian soul has its origin in God the Father. This great, this necessary and self-existing Being, possesses life in himself; he communicates this life to his Son, and by his Son, to the flesh and blood united to his Son, and by means of this adorable flesh and blood, to the flesh and blood of all his members, in order to be conveyed thereby into their very hearts and souls; and, consequently, a true christian can with the utmost truth say these admi-



orable words of St. Paul, "I live, or rather, it is not I live, but Jesus Christ who lives in me."

*Secondly*—It confers sanctifying grace: as every Sacrament worthily received confers sanctifying grace on the receiver; the blessed Eucharist, as excelling all the other Sacraments in dignity, and containing the fountain of grace itself, must doubtless confer sanctifying grace. To receive the body and blood of Christ worthily, a state of grace is presupposed in the receiver. When the blessed Eucharist finds no obstacle in the soul, to the great graces our Saviour brings with him, it augments our graces, and these graces feed, nourish, succour, and strengthen the soul in its spiritual operations. The observation of St. Chrysostom will help us to conceive what kind of sanctifying grace is particularly and peculiarly conferred by this Sacrament. He remarks, that our Saviour repeated, three different times, that this Sacrament gives life, confers life. And what kind of life? Not the life of the body undoubtedly, as St. Anselm says, and is evident in itself. It must be then the life of the soul. What is the life of the soul? Divine love. Hence we may safely conclude with the Saints and the Divines, that the graces conferred by the Eucharist help us to love God, and facilitate the practice of divine love to us; and as love to be happy must be mutual, the blessed Eucharist not only helps to love God, but engages God mutually to love us.

*Thirdly*—It confers actual graces. You know, Christians, that actual graces are those graces which both excite and help us to do good; and the actual graces conferred by every Sacrament are those graces which enable us to attain the end meant by God, in the institution of each Sacrament. We

learn from the Council of Trent what was the end which God principally proposed by the institution of the blessed Eucharist as a Sacrament; for the holy Council calls it a sign of unity, a bond of charity, and a symbol of concord. Hence the end principally intended in the Sacrament is an union with Christ as our head, and an union among ourselves; a spiritual, moral, and corporeal union with our Saviour, and a spiritual and moral union among ourselves. We are united to our Saviour by love, and by acts of love; we are united to each other by charity and by acts of charity. The actual graces, therefore, which we receive in this Sacrament, aid us in a powerful manner to love perfectly both God and our neighbour, and to conquer every temptation that would lessen or destroy this great virtue of charity.

*Fourthly*—It remits venial sins and effaces venial faults. We have the authority of the Council of Trent to prove this assertion, when in the thirteenth session it says, that “The Eucharist is an antidote by which we are freed from our daily faults.”

This denfition of the Council may be explained in an easy and satisfactory manner. As this Sacrament was instituted by the way of food and drink, it must effect in a spiritual life what eating and drinking effect in a corporal life. Now, as eating and drinking recruit the weakness of our body, and repair the substance we lose daily, in like manner the blessed Eucharist heals the daily infirmities of our soul, and repairs what we daily lose by venial sins; for though venial sins do not destroy charity, nor expel sanctifying grace from our souls, yet they ever diminish the acts of love, the fervour of charity in our souls, and always leave a foul stain behind them.

*Fifthly*—It preserves us greatly from future sins,

both mortal and venial. The Council of Trent, in the session mentioned just now, defines that this Sacrament is an antidote which frees us from venial sins, and preserves us from mortal sins. To explain this, we need only repeat the reasoning just now adduced; for as corporeal food invigorates and strengthens a man internally against the internal principles of corruption, which he always carries with him in his body, so likewise this Sacrament, which was instituted by way of nourishment, strengthens and invigorates us spiritually against all spiritual diseases, and against the death of the soul itself. The specific manners and ways by which the blessed Eucharist effects the preservation of a soul from mortal sin are nearly as follow:—

On every necessary occasion, it imparts actual graces to conquer temptations and keep the commandments; it augments in our souls habitual charity and other supernatural virtues, by which we are powerfully inclined to practice good, and avoid evil; it diminishes the ardor of all our passions, from which, as from so many poisoned sources, numberless sins flow; it keeps off devils from us, and restrains their power of kindling up our passions, or tempting us in any other way to sin. For, as the blessed Eucharist is a commemorative mark of our Saviour's passion, the conquered devils tremble at it, and dare not to attack us; and lastly, it removes from us the external occasions of sin. For certain it is, that the blessed Eucharist, if received often and well, will not only procure us internal graces to preserve us from sin, but external protection also to secure us from falling; it is not only a nourishment, by which we are internally strengthened and preserved, but a strong shield also, by which we are externally protected against ruin or destruction.

*Sixthly*—A man thus preserved from sin by means of the blessed Eucharist, obtains final perseverance on earth, and, consequently, everlasting glory in heaven. 'This effect is clearly marked out by our Saviour in the 6th chapter of St. John—"He that eats my flesh shall live for ever." It likewise restores, by a fresh title, that immortality to the body which it first lost by sin. Our Saviour says, in the same chapter—"He that eats my body and drinks my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." And again, "Your fathers did eat manna and died; he that eats this bread shall live for ever." 'Tis true that all mankind will, in consequence of a general law made by the Almighty, rise again and be immortal; but those who have actually received the blessed Eucharist, have an additional claim to the title of resurrection and immortality, on account of their having been once united to the life-giving flesh of our Redeemer; for he purposely annexed this effect to his body and blood, in order to signify more clearly to us the great efficacy of this vivifying food.

*Seventhly*—It produces, according to the Council of Florence, a sensible pleasure in those who receive it worthily. 'Tis for this reason that the Church applies to this celestial bread the following texts of Scripture, expressive of such a delight:—"His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings," (Genesis lix. chap. 20.) And again, "Thou hast given them bread from heaven, replenished with all sweetness and delight."

But it may be necessary here to make two remarks. The first is, that this effect of a sensible delight and pleasure is hardly ever communicated to those who approach this Sacrament without the

most careful preparation, and the desire at least of having a perfect disposition, or who have the least deliberate affection to venial sin, or who are voluntarily distracted, or lukewarm, or negligent. The second is, that this effect is very frequently suspended by Providence, in order to increase the humility of those who communicate, and to conceal from them the progress they have made in perfection.

These are the effects which the blessed Sacrament produces in the souls of those who receive it often, who receive it with due dispositions, and after a proper preparation. We are warranted to declare this with confidence, from the words of our Saviour himself, from the decisions of the Council of Trent, and from the explanations of all Catholic Fathers, writers, and divines. How can we then explain, on any rational principles, the conduct of those Catholics who believe all this by faith, and still have no relish for this celestial food. The inconceivable love which the Son of God has for us, makes him eagerly wish to unite himself most intimately to us to become one body, one heart, one mind, one soul; in a word, one and the self-same thing with us. He wishes to dwell in us, and we in him. He wishes to give himself entirely to us, without any exception, any division, any reserve. He wishes that we should no longer live by that miserable life which poor mortals have, but that we should live by that divine life which he is willing to communicate to us. If all these proofs of love make no impression on our hearts, our own interest surely, to which we are seldom blind, should strongly lead us to wish for so salutary a remedy for all our evils. We are taught by faith to believe that this divine food weakens in us that fatal inclination we

have to evil, and moderates in us the violence of all our passions; it supports the health and life of the soul; it augments our courage and strength to surmount every obstacle in the way to our salvation; it preserves us against all the dangerous accidents of our life, and protects us against the most formidable attacks of the devil, and all the enemies of our salvation. Gratitude to God, love to our Saviour, and our own interest, combine together here to make us wish for this celestial food. Be careful, therefore, in making the necessary preparations; dispose your souls to receive it in a manner worthy of so great a Sacrament, and by that means you will necessarily acquire an happy and an experimental knowledge of all its salutary effects, which is a blessing I wish you all.

---

*On the Effects of the Blessed Eucharist,  
continued.*

“As the living father hath sent me, and I live by the father, so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.”—John, chap. vi. verse 58.

The life of grace, like a natural life, has its sickness, its weakness, and its langour: for it is extremely difficult to be so strictly united with so corruptible a flesh as we have, without sometimes feeling the effects of this corruption. For every rational person should readily allow that it is difficult, extremely difficult, for us to be constantly beset with formidable enemies, without losing our courage; to be constantly fighting, without ever being wounded; to be day and night under arms, without ever slum-

bering over them; to be ever rowing against an impetuous torrent of passions, without being ever hurried down the stream. Every one who endeavours to serve God in earnest, knows well that this is true. He likewise knows that our life is nothing else but a chequered succession, a perpetual vicissitude of good and bad. One time we courageously advance in the road of perfection; another time we shamefully fall back. To-day we are transported with fervour, and to-morrow we fall into the languor of tepidity. There is no remedy so sure or so efficacious for all these infirmities as the holy communion. This I hope to prove at some length. There are many causes of relaxation in the road of virtue. The first, most common and most ordinary cause, is venial sin; for venial sin stabs the soul some way, more or less, though it does not inflict a mortal wound; it always makes the soul more languid, and lessens our vigour in the pursuit of virtue. Now, according to the Council of Trent, contrition with communion is an excellent remedy for venial sin; for it is an antidote that cures venial sin and preserves from mortal sin. St. Chrysostom and St. Ephrem, long before the Council of Trent, have taught us the same doctrine. St. Chrysostom says, "That these small sins are like so many serpents gnawing the soul, and that the blood of Jesus Christ is a salutary potion that puts them all to death."

The second cause is, that we are frightened at the idea of being obliged to be fighting constantly against the enemies of our salvation, and to be constantly offering violence to our natural inclinations. This thought makes us lose courage, and; consequently, makes us relax in the way of virtue.

St. Laurence Justinian assures us, "That the blessed Eucharist is the best and surest remedy against this danger." He says, "If any one languish in the road of virtue, if he begin to be fatigued in the pursuit of perfection, and desire to be strengthened, let him receive the communion with faith and confidence, and he will recover all his former vigour."

The third cause is, external occupations and an embarrassment of worldly affairs. These usually dissipate the mind, make us lose the presence of God, and interior recollection. If we are not too much overwhelmed with those, if we do not create them unnecessarily to ourselves, the communion will greatly help to support us under them, and to carry us with success through them. St. John Chrysostom says, that the communion is a source of light, that it will enlighten us, that it will recall the presence of God and produce interior recollection.

Though the communion was designed by our Saviour to make us truly perfect, yet we must not fancy to ourselves, that we can arrive at this perfection by a few communions. God usually acts in the order of grace as he acts in the order of nature. We never see children step up into manhood at once; it is only by time, by degrees, and by frequent nourishment, they advance in stature and strength. A spiritual life has similar gradations, and similar stages; and our Saviour proportions the operations of his grace to the age, the state, and the condition of those who receive him. He is the milk of children, he is the physician of the sick, and he is the solid nourishment of perfect souls. But in whatever state and condition we are, ordinarily speaking, 'tis only by frequent communion



that we reform our faults and advance in perfection.

Hesychius says, when the blood of Jesus Christ enters into us, it washes away every stain of sin, it remits our natural imperfections, and calms our troubles and agitations. If we afterwards watch closely at the door of our hearts, and preserve carefully the grace we have received, then this divine body will, when we receive it next, spread a greater radiance over the soul, and by degrees, at length, render it more brilliant than the stars.

St. Bernard says, "Baptism in its bath has washed away all the guilt of criminal sin; but it has not cured our passions, nor our corrupt inclinations. These fatal wounds left still behind, require many a plaister and many a dressing before they are thoroughly cured: but let us take courage; we have an infallible cure for all these in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. For this adorable body produces two effects in us: it diminishes the ardour of our passions, and prevents us from consenting to sin. If we therefore no longer feel the violent emotions of anger, envy or other passions, let us thank our Saviour for this great blessing, for it is surely the sacrament of his body and blood that has produced this happy change in us."

The communion perfects all our virtues, in proportion as it diminishes our vicious habits, and in purifying our souls by degrees, from all our small faults and imperfections, it superadds a new degree of splendour to our souls, every time we receive worthily.

*First*—The blessed Eucharist every time it is worthily received, will ever and infallibly produce

a new degree of sanctifying grace in the soul, and augment the habits of faith, hope and charity.

*Secondly*—It perfects the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, more and more.

*Thirdly*—It augments the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance; and the moral virtues of humility, patience, mortification, &c.

*Fourthly*—As the blessed Eucharist excites us by actual graces to produce acts of all the virtues, we thereby acquire an habit of these virtues, and the practice of them is rendered easier to us.

*Lastly*—As these actual graces produce a new light in the understanding, by which we know Jesus Christ better, and a pleasing unctio in the will, by which we love him better, the happiness which we then feel penetrates the soul, softens it, melts it, and disposes it to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. For as soft wax easily receives the impression of a seal applied to it, so the soul liquified, as it were, by the sweet unctio it feels, conforms itself more readily to the sentiments and inclinations of the son of God. And the more our soul resembles our Saviour, the more it loves him, and the more it is loved by him. 'Tis then that the soul by receiving Jesus Christ worthily, is raised at last to the highest degree of perfection; For true perfection consists in imitating Jesus Christ, in resembling Jesus Christ, and in loving Jesus Christ.

Another effect produced by a good communion, is great unctio and sweetness, sensibly felt after communion, by the worthy receiver.

'Tis an effect which our Saviour has annexed to the blessed sacrament, not always indeed, but

frequently, according to his divine will, and according to the different dispositions of those who receive him. This effect is not doubted by any confessor who directs many pious penitents; for he knows certainly, that many receive this favour. And though he had not so much experimental knowledge, it cannot be called in question after the repeated and frequent declarations of the saints and pious persons who have experienced it.

St. Macarius says, the faithful soul feels, tastes and experiences in the communion, ineffable joys and pleasures almost celestial.

St. Cyprian says, this sacrament contains every possible taste like the manna formerly; and by an efficacy truly miraculous makes those who receive it worthily, feel every happiness they could wish, and a sweetness that surpasses every other sweetness in the world.

St. Bonaventure says, O faithful soul have you not known by experience, that when you received my body and blood, you received the honeycomb, the sweetness of my divinity joined to my humanity.

There are numbers, certainly, and by far the greater part of those, who may be justly counted truly pious, who do not experience those great interior consolations spoken of. The saints and divines assign two reasons for which our Saviour deprives the faithful of the unctions and consolations experienced by others after communion.

The first, to try them, to purify them, and to keep them humble. The privation of those pleasures after communion are necessary, to all those who have not as yet acquired a considerable degree of humility. Heavenly favours to such persons

would destroy all their merit and sweep all their virtues away at once.

This privation is likewise useful to all, for a trial of faith and fidelity. Receiving thus by faith, without any kind of consolation, they are greatly purified and merit considerably. This privation is often a punishment of our small infidelities and of our sensual unmortified lives. St. Albert the great says, that there should be some proportion, some analogy, between the food and him that uses it. The spiritual man takes pleasure in spiritual things, whereas the terrestrial or sensual man, feels no pleasure in spiritual things, nor has he any taste or relish for this food according to St. Paul. Now, if we sincerely wish to receive this pleasure, and to enjoy Jesus Christ in the communion, let us imitate Jesus Christ in our lives; let us resemble him in our conduct; let us cease to be terrestrial, sensual and carnal men; let us lead mortified lives, for it is a certain truth, and confirmed by the experience of all ages, with very few exceptions, that our Saviour does not confer any extraordinary favour, either in prayer or in communion on any who do not lead mortified lives.

However there are some consolations which every one going to communion, has in his power, and ought to excite and procure for himself. He ought to wish ardently for his salvation, sigh deeply for heaven, conceive the highest idea and esteem for sanctifying grace; and reflect that the blessed Sacrament is the source of all spiritual riches, and the best means to gratify all our holy desires; and any one who approaches the sacred table with these dispositions, will never want solid comfort and real joy after communion.

Universal charity makes us love God, the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost, the blessed mother of God, the Angels and Saints, and all mankind. Now our Saviour, in the blessed Eucharist, inspires us with a love for all these in the same manner, and at the same time that he kindles our soul with his.

For if God unites heaven and earth together as St. Paul says, it is particularly by means of the blessed Eucharist.

*First*—The communion perfects in us the eminent dignity we have of being children of God.—For on one side it unites us with Jesus Christ, as members are united with the head; and on the other it fills us with the Holy Ghost. Now, the word made flesh being *really* and *truly* the Son of God, we cannot be his members without sharing, at the same time, in the glorious quality of being children of God. 'Tis true, we are only adopted children; but this adoption is quite different from the adoption practised among men. For God in adopting us imprints his likeness on our souls, and fills us with his holy spirit. And after such an inestimable favour, can we, without the basest ingratitude, fail in our respect and love for our heavenly Father.

*Secondly*—The blessed Eucharist perfects the reign of the Holy Ghost in our souls. For the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or the peculiar graces of the new law, are the fruits of our Saviour's passion. Now the blessed Eucharist is a lively representation and commemoration of his passion, and in a particular manner applies its merits to us.—Again, the blessed Eucharist increases our charity, and it is by charity only that the Holy Ghost can dwell in us.

*Thirdly*—It makes us love the blessed Mother

of God. For, as St. Augustine says, we are made members of Jesus Christ by communion : how can the mother of God be his mother, without being our mother also? Hence we must have a filial love for her.

*Fourthly*—It unites the faithful by strong bonds of union together. For as they are all children of the same God, and of the blessed Virgin, they all have the same Father and mother, and consequently they are all brothers in a very strict sense of the word. St. Cyril says, it was an invention worthy of infinite wisdom, to find out means to unite all the faithful in so admirable a manner together. For when we receive our Saviour's body, he is then entire in each of us, though we all have our different bodies, and become thereby a common bond that unites us all together. The same may be also said of his soul: for he has but one soul, this soul is communicated to all the faithful, it must animate them all, and unite them together in a spiritual manner.

*Fifthly*—It associates us with the Angels.

Albert the Great says, that this union is effected chiefly by the communion. For our Saviour says, that no one can mount up to heaven that is not united with him. Now, 'tis by the communion that we are principally united with him, and with the Angels through him. Hence the Angels and men are made brothers, and co-heirs to the same inheritance. For by the communion we acquire a title, a right to be associated one day with the Angels in glory, and to fill the places of the rebel Angels who fell. From this union springs the great charity which Angels have for mankind. 'Tis this that makes the Angels watch with so much care and attention over

the conduct of men; 'tis this that makes them preserve so carefully to the day of Judgment, the ashes of every one who has communicated worthily as St. Chrysostom assures us they do.; 'tis this that makes them lament so bitterly the fall of the just, as the Prophet Isaiah teaches us; 'tis this that makes them rejoice so much at the conversion of a sinner, as our Saviour himself has told us. Surely gratitude should make us love them as our own.

*Sixthly*—It makes us have sentiments of charity for heretics, pagans, and infidels. This it does by inspiring us with love for Jesus Christ, and by raising us to the dignity of children of God. For as the empire of the son of God extends to the utmost limits of the world, all these people are his liege subjects, and bound to obey and serve him.—Now a zeal for his glory should urge us to wish that the darkness in which these people are involved should be removed; that they should return to their duty, and both acknowledge and adore their lawful king. Again, as children of God we are bound to do good to all mankind, without exception, for it is a characteristic of a God infinitely good, to find in his own nature, and not in the persons he loves, sufficient reason and motives to love and to do good to all without exception; and even to his very enemies, so, it is the bounden duty of the children of God to resemble their heavenly Father, to imitate his conduct, and to procure the salvation of all mankind without exception or reserve; and consequently the salvation of their own enemies, and of the enemies of God himself; 'tis thus that the communion establishes in our hearts the reign of perfect charity, by means of it God loves us as his children, and we love him as our Father. The

**H**oly Ghost loves us as a body which he animates; and we love him as the soul of our soul. Jesus Christ loves us as his own members; and we love him as our head. The blessed Virgin has for us the tenderness of a mother; and we for her the tender affection of children. All the Saints, and all the faithful, love each other mutually with a brotherly affection. The Angels look upon us and esteem us as their fellow-citizens; and we do the same to them. And we conceive for heretics, infidels and sinners, the same sentiments of affection, which our God and our Saviour conceives for them. These are the necessary consequences that flow from this sacrament of love. And the advantages that flow from it are equally extraordinary, for by it God espouses our interests as our Father; Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Brother; the blessed Virgin as our mother.

We are therefore beloved, protected, and befriended by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by the Virgin Mary, and by all the Saints and Angels. May God grant that as we share with all these here we may hereafter share with them in glory.—*Amen*

---

*On the Effects of the Blessed Eucharist, continued.*

**L**IKENESS or resemblance is one of the great sources of friendship; and the sympathy which unites hearts so strongly and so sweetly together, is nothing but a conformity of inclination. Why did God create man to his own likeness? It was doubt-



less to dispose man, thereby to observe the great commandment which he was to receive in due time, that is, to love God with his whole heart. Why did God make Eve like Adam? Because Eve was to be wife to Adam, and God designed to establish a tender and permanent love between them. The love that subsists between the eternal Father and his only begotten Son, is the source and model of all true love : but the son is the perfect image of the Father ; and the true, genuine spotless copy of all his adorable perfections. And in us, mortals, if our love for God can never arrive to its highest perfection but in heaven alone, it is, according to St. John, because in heaven alone, we shall be transformed into God, we shall be like unto him 1 John, 3.

A christian soul, therefore, who wishes to love Jesus Christ, and to be beloved by him in his turn, must endeavour to make himself like our Saviour. Now there is no surer or shorter way for us, poor mortals, to make ourselves like our Saviour, than by eating his body and blood. For, according to St. Thomas one of the great benefits produced in us by the communion, is, to transform us into a resemblance of the Son of God. Hence this celestial food is of a nature quite different from ordinary food. When we use ordinary food, we change it into our substance, into the substance of the body. But so far from changing this celestial food into our substance, it, on the contrary, changes us into itself and into its substance. Eat my body, said our Saviour to St. Augustine, and you will not transform me into you, but I will transform you into me.

We can resemble one another three different ways ; in likeness as to person, as to nature, and as to actions. We resemble Jesus Christ as to his

person, when we have similar features to his.—We resemble him as to his nature, when we have similar inclinations to his. We resemble him as to his actions, when we act by the same principles and for the same end as he does. The first kind of these likenesses may be called *image*; the second *sympathy*, and the third *inclination*.—Now by communion we resemble our Saviour all these three different ways. St. Thomas explains these three different kinds of likenesses by the following comparisons.

The *first*—Is like that of a seal impressed on soft wax; the seal leaves its mark behind it, and imprints its own figure on the wax. When we receive the communion, Jesus Christ applies his body like a seal to our hearts, and impresses on our souls an image of his goodness and other perfections. He applies himself to us, not to be changed into us, for that is impossible: but to change us into himself.

St. John Chrysostom says likewise, that the blood of Jesus Christ communicates the dignity, beauty, and excellence of Jesus Christ to our souls, and makes his image shine there with resplendent brightness.

It not only purifies and embellishes the soul, but makes it also shine with more dazzling lustre, than burnished gold or sparkling fire.

The second comparison is a drop of water thrown into a large vessel full of wine. This drop so thrown into the vessel, and mixing with the wine, is immediately lost, disappears, and can no longer be distinguished from the wine. In like manner, our soul after communion, plunged into an immense abyss of our Saviour's perfections, assumes so thoroughly all his sentiments, and conforms so entirely to all his inclinations, that it appears completely changed,

and transformed into our Saviour. It is then that our Saviour communicates to our souls his own goodness, inclinations, and virtues. It is then that the practice of humility, patience, mortification, and the love of our enemies, though all so repugnant to our corrupt nature, become quite easy to us.

*Thirdly*—After receiving the image of Jesus Christ, and inclinations similar to his, it is quite natural that a soul should then endeavour to imitate his conduct, and follow his example. This, Saint Thomas explains, by a third comparison, taken from the engrafting of a tree, for it is a property peculiar to a good fruit tree, that, if a branch of it be grafted on a wilding, or on a tree of bad quality, it will predominate so much over the wild tree, as to make it produce good fruit; for the superior excellence of the good tree prevailing, communicates its sweetness to the bad tree, and makes it produce sweet fruit. In like manner, the body of Jesus Christ being, as it were, grafted in us, communicates its natural goodness, sweetens our asperities, reforms our faults, and makes us produce flowers and fruits similar to his own.

Our obligations to our Saviour, for having communicated this excellent life to us, is, certainly, infinite. But, alas! this life is easily lost, and is, according to Saint Paul, a precious treasure, which we carry about us in earthen vessels; for numberless and artful and powerful are the enemies who are constantly endeavouring to rob us of it. From our corrupt nature we have a violent inclination to sensual pleasures; the world spreads out, before our eyes, its delusive charms, to fascinate us by its delusive pomp. And the devil, availing himself of our corrupt inclinations, on one side,

and of the seducing attractions of the world, on the other, is constantly endeavouring to destroy the love of Jesus Christ in our hearts, and to substitute the inordinate love of creatures in its place. Exposed then, as we are, to so many dangers, harassed by internal and external wars, divided in ourselves within, and strongly besieged from without, and constantly attacked by so many enemies, who have conspired together for our utter ruin, where, or to whom shall we have recourse? To our Saviour, in the Blessed Eucharist. For in this sacrament we will find sufficient strength to resist all attacks, and sufficient arms to conquer all our enemies. For the Son of God himself assures us, that by communion we shall be immortal. "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, shall live for ever"—John, 6th chap. This promise secures us from terrors excessive, and made St. Cyprian positively declare—do not doubt at all, Christian; the blessed Eucharist will make you triumph over the devil, the world, and yourself.

*First*—We have in the Eucharist a sovereign remedy to moderate our desires, to restrain our passions, and to cure that great corruption which has infected all mankind since original sin. Saint Thomas says, that ignorance in the understanding, weakness in the will, and a disrelish for spiritual things, with a great repugnance and difficulty to practice virtue, compose the sad inheritance of the unhappy children of sinful Adam. However, the body and blood of Jesus Christ will deliver all those who nourish themselves properly with it, from all the curses entailed on his descendants.

The great dangers of concupiscence consists in a

certain kind of darkness, by which it blinds the understanding, and a certain species of attracting pleasure, with which it flatters and seduces the heart. Now, the Blessed Eucharist dissipates this darkness, by the lights which it infuses into the understanding; it gives a disrelish to sensual pleasures, by the chaste delights it inspires us with, and emancipates hereby from the tyranny of these passions. For the truth of this assertion, I could safely appeal to the experience of numbers who hear me. However, I shall confirm it by the testimony of the Holy Fathers.

Saint John Chrysostom says, that the light which Jesus Christ sheds into our soul by the communion, resembles the light of the sun in this particular, that it shews every object in its proper form and colour; but it exceeds the sun in this, that it is not succeeded by the darkness of night.

St. Cyprian says, that the communion disarms concupiscence of all its power to hurt us, by inspiring us with a disgust and disrelish for all sensual and carnal pleasures.

*Secondly*—The world, to imperfect Christians, is truly formidable, by its menaces and persecutions, by its promises and caresses. But Jesus Christ, who has so gloriously triumphed over the world, teaches us by communion the art to resist it, and supplies us with strength to conquer it: the experience of the primitive ages, and the testimony of the ancient Holy Fathers, concur to prove this truth. From these we learn that the primitive Christians, during many centuries of persecution, despised the world, braved and triumphed over death by their constancy, and overcame the most savage and inhuman tyrants that ever disgraced the human race.

And the Holy Fathers, particularly St. Cyprian and St. Chrysostom assure us, that it was by communion they were chiefly enabled to effect all these wonders.

St. Augustine agrees in the same opinion: for he says, "You admire the courage of St. Laurence on a gridiron. This was merely the effect of the blessed Eucharist. Fortified by this flesh, he was insuperable to the most cruel torments." You admire the firmness and fortitude of a St. Vincent. Do not be too much surprised at it: he owed it all to the communion.

Though the providence of God has secured us in our times from such persecutions as the primitive Christians experienced from tyrants, yet we have other enemies to dread, perhaps not less dangerous, though in appearance not so formidable. These enemies are worldly people. For these people ever did, and ever will persecute the followers of Jesus Christ. They ever were, and ever will be irreconcilable enemies to the disciples of Jesus. Calumny, mockery, derision, contempt, invectives and insults, are the diabolical arts they employ to discredit piety, and to render pious people ridiculous or hateful. Besides these persecutions from the world, we are all liable to sickness, poverty, afflictions and other miseries. To bear up against the accumulated shock of all these evils, and to support them with a christian patience, we require great graces, strong and powerful succours. And according to all the Saints and Divines, there is nothing can supply us with a more powerful aid to resist and vanquish all these, though ever so dreadful, than prayer and the blessed Eucharist. But let me here warn a faithful soul against a fatal error, which may

be productive of the most dangerous consequences, if not guarded against. This error is, to believe that our Saviour will produce all these wonderful effects by the communion, without any efforts or co-operation on our side, and that we have nothing else to do, but barely to communicate. This would be a miserable delusion. Know then and recollect, that the blessed Eucharist weakens all our enemies for us; but it does not destroy them all entirely: it fills us with courage, and furnishes us with arms to vanquish all our enemies, but it does not exempt us from the necessity of fighting them. Jesus Christ strengthens us in all our sufferings, but he never pretended nor intended to free us from sufferings; for it is very certain that the blessed Eucharist never rendered the martyrs either invulnerable or insensible, though it rendered them victorious amidst the most cruel torments.

The devil is the third enemy, who uses all his arts and violence to deprive us of this life. To a Christian who has mortified his passions, to a Christian who despises the persecutions and caresses of the world, the devil is never formidable; he is rather weak, and the Eucharist will then secure such a Christian against all his wily tricks, cunning artifices, or open attacks. St. Chrysostom says, "Let us combat boldly against the devil; for we have arms brighter than gold, sharper than fire, and as light as a feather: arms prepared for us at the table of the Lord, where he makes us sit down with him, in order to recruit all our strength, and to vanquish all our enemies. For if the blood of the paschal lamb, with which the Israelites sprinkled their doors, preserved them from the exterminating angel, how much more will the blood of

“ Jesus Christ, of which the other was merely a figure, secure and defend us against all the attacks of the devil.” And in other parts of his works, the same Saint says, “ That the blood of Jesus Christ makes the devils fly away.” The reason assigned for their flying away is, that they know that our Saviour’s blood is the sure mark of their defeat, and the glorious instrument which our Saviour made use of to conquer and enslave them. Hence they cannot bear the sight of it, but fly away trembling when they see it.

Let me conclude with the words of St. Paul, which I address to a pious person who communicates often, and with the due dispositions and preparations. Let neither death nor life, neither Angels nor principalities, neither things present nor things to come ; let nothing in heaven nor in hell, ever tear from your hearts the love of God, which Jesus Christ has inspired you with in communion. Let me likewise tell you, worldly souls, who communicate but seldom, that it is not in the least surprising that you should quickly lose that life of grace which you once received ; for nothing but a gross ignorance of religion, and of the corruption of human nature, could ever make you imagine that you are able, without the help of the blessed Eucharist, to conquer your passions, when they tempt you strongly ; to resist the world, when it pulls you forcibly ; and to defeat the devil, when he attacks you violently. Listen to St. Cyril, who tells you that all those who have been baptised, and who do not frequent the Church, Sacraments and Communion, and who, even under the pretext of piety and respect, refuse to receive Jesus Christ in the communion, remove themselves



to a considerable distance from eternal life. Listen to St. John Chrysostom, who tells you, that if it be dangerous to communicate with tepidity, it is, however, certain death to abstain a long time from communion. So true it is, that the Royal Prophet, a long time ago, foresaw and foretold it.

The unerring authority of our Saviour himself confirms this beyond the possibility of any doubt, when he declares to us, "That unless we eat of his flesh and drink of his blood, we shall have no life in us." And on the other hand, whoever eats of his flesh and drinks of his blood, will possess life everlasting; and he will raise him up at the last day, and which is a blessing I wish you all.

---

*On the Effects of the Blessed Eucharist,  
continued.*

IN the last conference, I pointed out some of the obstacles which usually prevent the Blessed Eucharist from operating, or producing its wonderful effects, in favour of those who communicate frequently. In this discourse, I shall point out the dispositions necessary for all those who wish to derive profit or advantage from the holy communion.

To comprehend this fully, we should observe that God does not act in the sanctification of our souls, in the same manner that he did in the creation of the world. By a word's speaking—by a simple act of the will, he made this world, and all things in it, from nothing. Here he required no succour, no co-operation from others. But in the

sanctification of our souls, he does not proceed thus, by an omnipotent and absolute act of his will, to produce the wished-for effect. He begins our sanctification by his grace ; but we must co-operate with his grace to be sanctified. He furnishes us most abundantly with all the necessary and usual means to be sanctified ; but we must make use of these means, we must put them in practice ; otherwise we will not be sanctified. Such is the order, and such the method, which God in his wisdom has established for our sanctification.

If the blessed Eucharist, therefore, does not produce always in those who receive it, all the wonderful effects usually attributed to it, this does not proceed from any want of virtue or efficacy in the blessed Eucharist to produce these effects, but it proceeds entirely from the want of due dispositions in those who receive it.

For the blessed Eucharist was instituted by our Saviour, under the appearances of bread and wine, for our spiritual nourishment. From this definition, and from the circumstances of the case, saints and divines have taken occasion to explain the dispositions required for our spiritual nourishment, by comparing them to the dispositions required for our corporeal food. Now there are four conditions required, in order that corporeal food may do us good and be useful to us.

*First*—We must be alive : for it is a self-evident absurdity to present food to a dead man. Food preserves life where it is, but does not communicate life where it is not.

*Secondly*—We must have an appetite. For a good appetite is an excellent disposition to relish the food we take, and to profit by it afterwards.

*Thirdly*—We must actually eat; for without this, the other dispositions will avail but little.

*Fourthly*—After eating we must return to the occupations of our state and employment, and discharge them with new vigour and cheerfulness.

It can, therefore, by a just analogy, be said, that four things are likewise necessary in order to receive and profit by our spiritual nourishment. First, we must be living: that is, in the state of grace. Secondly, we must have an appetite for this food: that is, we must have a strong desire to receive this spiritual nourishment. Thirdly, we must eat it; and fourthly, we must apply ourselves with more care and fervour than before, to sanctify our souls, and to promote God's honour and glory.

*First*—We must be alive. It is a principle admitted by all the Holy Fathers, that to receive worthily the blessed Eucharist, the soul must be in the state of sanctifying grace, and possess the three great virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Though it be certain, from the primitive practice of giving the blessed Eucharist to children after baptism, that the infused habit of these virtues, without their acts, would entitle us to receive the blessed Eucharist with some profit; yet it is equally certain, that to profit abundantly by the graces it confers, we should make acts of these virtues. We should actually and particularly believe all the truths which God has revealed, relative to the blessed Eucharist. We should have great confidence in it, as an excellent means of salvation, and we should love God for the goodness he has shewn us, by bestowing on us the blessed Eucharist. It is a matter of some importance to know the objects and motives of our faith, hope, and charity, with

regard to the Eucharist, in order to make proper acts of these virtues.

*First*—The object of our faith in the blessed Eucharist, or what the church teaches us to believe, with regard to the blessed Eucharist, may be reduced to four points. First, we must believe, that the Eucharist is not merely a figure of our Saviour, but that it contains really and truly the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Secondly, we must believe that the substance of the bread and wine are entirely changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, that the accidents or appearances of bread and wine remain, after the bread and wine are changed. Fourthly, that our Saviour is entire in the host, and in every part of the host. That by dividing the host, we divide only the appearances, but not the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that he who receives a part of the host, receives as much as he who receives an entire host.

The motive of our faith, or the reason why we believe our Saviour to be present in the blessed Eucharist is, the authority of God, the words of God. As he is infallible, and can neither deceive nor be deceived, we cannot doubt in the least, but whatever he has revealed to his church, must be infallibly true. Now, our Saviour has declared in the most clear, formal, and positive terms; this is my body, which shall be delivered for you; this is my blood, which shall be shed for you.

This strong and lively faith of our Saviour's presence, in the Blessed Eucharist is so absolutely necessary, that we may safely say, that all our benefits of the communion depend greatly on it. For this lively faith will easily produce acts of

adoration, acts of hope, and acts of charity. It will make us likewise prepare carefully to receive our Saviour, in a proper manner. For if we make such pompous preparations to receive an earthly king, what care should we not take, what preparations should we not use, to receive properly the king of heaven and earth, before whom the kings of this world are nothing, or at best but dust and ashes.

It was on this principle, and for this reason, that in the primitive ages of the church the faithful were obliged to make many acts of faith, before they received communion. Three times after the consecration of the bread, and three times after the consecration of the wine, all the faithful present cried out *Amen*. They meant, by this, according to Saint Augustin and Saint Ambrose, yes, we believe truly that Jesus Christ is really present on the altar. And immediately before communion, the deacon cried out, with a loud voice, *the body of Christ*. The faithful again answered, the seventh time, *Amen*: yes, we sincerely believe. Any one, therefore, who wishes to receive worthily, should frequently make similar acts of faith; for instance, in the morning, evening, and every other time of prayer, when they enter the chapel, leave it, or pass by it. I wish them to be convinced, that if they make these acts but seldom, if they make them only on the days of communion, they expose themselves greatly, never to have that lively faith which contributes so much to make us receive the communion worthily.

*The Second* is hope. Hope may be defined a pious and rational self-love, which prompts us to

seek heaven, and the supernatural happiness which God has promised us.

Saint Augustin calls the blessed Eucharist, the sacrament of hope; and Saint Chrysostom calls it, likewise, the sacrament of confidence. To profit by the communion, as we ought, hope is not less necessary than faith. The objects of this hope are all the great and many advantages which this sacrament procures for us, when we receive it worthily; and the motives of our hope in the blessed Eucharist are derived from the promises which our Saviour has so often and so strongly repeated in scripture, that he would communicate life, divine life, by this sacrament. To strengthen our hope in this sacrament, it is strongly recommended to meditate often on these promises.

*Thirdly*—Charity is more necessary than any other virtue, to profit fully by the communion. This is the nuptial robe, without which no one should presume to enter into the hall, and sit down at this celestial banquet. For, to speak correctly, it is charity alone that gives life to the soul. He that loves not, shall perish. It is by it that we arrive to the end proposed to us by the blessed Eucharist. It is by it we unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, and are transformed into him. In short, the more our hearts burn with the divine love of charity, the more we are disposed to share in all the benefits of the communion.

The motives and the objects of charity in the blessed Sacrament, are the same as in all other virtues. The object of charity is God, and the glory of God. The motive of charity is founded on the adorable perfections which God possesses. But as these perfections must be well known, in

order that they should excite us to love God, we should often make these adorable perfections the subject of our thoughts, reflections, and meditation. Now, if we except the incarnation alone, there is no other subject, in the order of nature, or in the order of grace, more calculated to kindle this divine love in our breasts than the blessed Eucharist. For where else has God displayed so much as in this sacrament, his omnipotent power, his boundless love, and his infinite wisdom? Where else does he work so many miracles? where else does he make himself better known? where else does he make himself to be tasted so deliciously as in this sacrament? Hence, a frequent meditation on the wonderful ways of God in the blessed Eucharist, is an excellent method to excite the love of God in our souls.

The second disposition required, is an ardent desire to receive the blessed Eucharist. For as a good appetite for our material food indicates clearly the good disposition of the body to profit by it, in the same manner, an ardent desire of receiving the blessed Eucharist, is an excellent preparation in the soul to receive and profit by the many benefits and advantages which this sacrament produces.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa, speaking in general on this subject, says, God wishes to be longed for. But there is no place, nor thing, where he wishes or desires, or likes to be longed for more, than in the Blessed Eucharist. Nothing gratifies his eager desire of coming to us, more than an ardour on our side to receive him.

Our Saviour himself has set us here an example of this desire, when he said to his apostles, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you."

The Holy Fathers, in general, when they invited the faithful to communion, apply to it such passages of scripture as speak of hunger and thirst. For instance, Isaiah 55, All you who thirst, come to the waters. And St. Matt. 5th chap. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice.

This disposition was so common among the primitive Christians, that they called the blessed Eucharist *desiderata*; that is, the object of all their desires. From all these authorities it is easy to conclude, that the soul is never better prepared to receive abundantly all the graces and blessings which this sacrament contains and produces, than when it can say truly with the prophet, "My soul, O Lord! has truly longed for you all the night, and I will get up at the break of day, to look for you with my whole heart."

In order to excite this desire, we should first endeavour to know well all the blessings and advantages that the blessed Eucharist affords us, to deliver us from all that is evil, and to procure us all that is good in this world and the next. For desire is a love of some good thing which we have not. It is an emotion of the soul, by which we aspire to the possession of something which we have not, but which we know or fancy would be useful or good to us. Hence, if we wish to kindle this holy fire in our hearts, we should consider seriously, and reflect carefully, on the wonderful effects of the blessed Eucharist, and on the inestimable advantages it procures for a soul who receives it worthily. For it is almost impossible that a person who wishes in earnest to be sanctified, and who distinctly knows the extraordinary efficacy



which the blessed Eucharist has in raising us to the highest perfection, will not feel an earnest desire of receiving it. This is the doctrine of St. Augustin, who says, "That we eat, with avidity, this  
"divine nourishment, when we meditate carefully on  
"all that Jesus Christ has done and suffered for us."

The second means to excite this desire in us, is to join fasting, prayer, and mortification to our meditations; for the enjoyment of any one pleasure whatsoever, diminishes the strength of the soul, and renders it less capable of desiring any other. Hence, when our hearts are attached to sensual pleasures, or to any other satisfaction merely human, our souls conceive but very feeble desires of supernatural things. On the other hand, let us deprive our souls of sensual pleasures, of frivolous amusements, and unnecessary gratifications, and we will then find that our souls will desire and relish supernatural pleasures. For our souls being naturally formed for happiness, will always seek, and must always have happiness or pleasure of some kind or other. If we deprive ourselves, then, of sensual pleasures, our souls will rush forward with collected vigour, to the happiness promised in the communion, to those who are well disposed.

---

*On the Effects of the Blessed Eucharist,  
continued.*

IN the last discourse, I shew the great danger of relapsing into sin after communion. The purport of this instruction is to shew how dangerous a thing it is, for those who communicate often, to retain an affection even to venial sins.

There are very few things, in a spiritual life,

more difficult to determine always, and in every case, than whether sins proceed from weakness, or from an affection to them. And it is this difficulty chiefly, that puzzles confessors sometimes, to know whether they should admit to, or repel from weekly communion, some penitents who apply to them. It is true that the saints and divines give general rules to distinguish venial sins of affection from venial sins of weakness; but still it is no easy matter to apply these general rules to the particular case of every individual; for the same sins may be committed, and even the same number of sins by two persons, one of whom sins through affection, and the other through weakness. And what augments the difficulty of discrimination between them, is the penitent's self-love or ignorance. If the penitents carefully watched their actions, investigated their motives, and manifested both these to their confessor, he would be sufficiently enabled thereby to trace these sins to their origin. But the penitent blinded by self-love or ignorance, frequently hides these motives, both from himself and from his confessor. A confessor is hereby led into an error, which may greatly retard a reformation of the penitent, or his advancement in perfection.

Besides the marks which I assigned in the last conference, I shall assign another now, from St. Laurence Justinian. This saint asserts that a person has no affection to any particular sin, except that sin predominates in him; and that any particular sin will not predominate in us, when we combat it.

We must distinguish carefully between an inclination or tendency to sin, and an affection to sin. An inclination, or tendency to sin is an involuntary liking or love for sin, which is dragging us to it, as

it were in spite of us. But affection is a free and unrestrained love. Now it is not the tendency or inclination to sin that will ever prevent us from receiving all the benefits of the communion. This inclination may make our souls sick, but will not make them criminal. The blessed Eucharist cures such involuntary sickness; but a free affection prevents all.

There is another method by which confessors judge that their penitents retain an affection for venial sins; for if their penitents fall into the same sins again in a short time without any extraordinary temptation, if they do not carefully avoid the occasions of these sins, and if they do not use the means prescribed by their confessors to conquer them, it is a pretty sure sign that they have an affection for these sins. Some examples will explain what I mean. A man who confesses to-day, that he was guilty three or four times this week, of saying bitter or sharp things to his neighbour, in company, and thereby hurts his neighbour's peace of mind; if he come to me again in eight days, and repeats the same sins again a second or third time, I easily conclude that he has not sufficiently retracted this bad habit, and that he has an adhesion still to this sin. A man comes to me, and accuses himself, that he indulged vanity and impatience, four or five times this week, and next week again renews the same confession. If, upon inquiry, I find that he had no extraordinary temptation, and that he did not use the means prescribed him, I judge that he still has a habit not sufficiently retracted, and, consequently, a latent affection for these sins in themselves or in their cause.

A man charges himself, in several successive con-

fessions, that he has told many jocose lies ; I readily conclude, that he is not cured from an affection to these sins. A man commits, now and then, some little excess in drinking, and still frequents company without necessity ; he proves thereby, that by not avoiding the occasion, he does not hate the sin sufficiently, or, in other words, retains an affection for it. In short, any one may be said to have an affection for sin, who does not apply suitable remedies to eradicate the cause of it, that strives to hide itself in his heart ; consequently, if he do not avoid the occasions of it, if he do not use his best efforts, and offer violence to himself to subdue it, if he do not watch himself carefully not to fall into it, if he do not rise quickly, and humble himself before God, when he has the misfortune to have fallen into it, that man has an affection for that sin.

Those who commit venial sins through surprise, inadvertently or indeliberately, are deprived of none of the benefits which the communion usually produces. For we know that the saints frequently committed such sins. St. John says, "*he that says that he has no sin, is a liar.*" And St. James declares "*that we all offend in many things.*" Again, the holy scripture assures us, that the just man falls seven times. In those passages of the scripture, where it is said that the most just and most holy are guilty of sin, it must be undoubtedly meant, that the most perfect commit sins sometimes inadvertently, indeliberately, and through surprise. Hence, it is evident, that such sins are no obstacle to communion, nor to frequent communion. And in truth if they were, who could ever communicate ? Cassian very justly remarks, that such sins

as these we are speaking of, far from being a sufficient cause to prevent our communions, should rather be an additional motive to make us have recourse to communion with avidity and haste. For communion is the best cure for our souls, and the surest means to purify them from these imperfections.

The saints advise two things to such persons, before communion. Let them pay particular attention to them.

The first is the advice of St. Gregory. As the elect themselves cannot be without some sin, every one should, before communion, use his best efforts to expiate the smallest stains which his soul might have contracted, through the frailty of human nature. Otherwise these faults, though small in themselves, will, by degrees, cover his soul all over with deformity, and destroy all the lustre of its beauty.

The second is the advice of Cassian. Before communion, be sure to fortify yourself with the most profound humility, as the best guard you could make use of against any dangers in communion. Establish in your soul this fundamental maxim, never to be forgotten, that had you accomplished every thing that man could possibly do, to prepare yourself for communion, yet still you should believe firmly, that you could never arrive to that degree of purity, that would make you worthy of communion. With these, or similar preparations, let such souls as we are describing, approach to communion, and approach often to communion. Their faults committed inadvertently, indeliberately, or through surprise, excite rather the pity than the indignation of our Saviour, and render them rather miserable than

criminal. We should therefore never prevent such persons from receiving communion.

It should not be omitted here to observe, that there are two species of venial sins, which the Holy Fathers recommend to the faithful, to beware of in particular, and to expiate more carefully, before communion. Because, said they, these two faults have a more special and a more marked opposition to the benefits of communion, than any other. These faults are faults against purity, and faults against charity. From a conviction that it is not necessary to caution the pious against the smallest faults contrary to purity, I shall say very little about them. Because, all the pious in the world have, in general, a great horror against these faults, and are very vigilant to avoid them. But, have they the same horror for small faults against charity? Are they equally guarded against them? I am sorry to be obliged to declare, that they are not. Yet there is no fault which the Holy Fathers recommend to the faithful so much to detest and guard against, as small faults against charity, before or after communion. Saint Augustine says: “he who receives the sacrament of unity, without preserving the bonds of peace and charity, far from profiting by this mystery, receives there a testimony against himself.”

Saint Bernard—“God forbid that I should ever receive this sacrament with any anger, resentment or jealousy, against any one in the world. My faith teaches me, that it is a sacrament by which God reconciles the world to himself. Hence, we who receive this God of charity and peace, should never commit the smallest fault

“against charity, either before or after communion.”

Secondly, it should be remarked that venial sins, committed at the moment of receiving, or immediately after receiving communion, have a special malignity attached to them, on account of their being committed at that particular time, and, consequently, such sins will deprive us of some effects that usually flow from a good communion. These, like all other sins, are either of commission or omission. The usual sins of commission which happen, at that time, are, a little anger, or a little resentment, deliberately indulged. The sins of omission are committed by those, who, through neglect or other distractions, omit thanking, or speaking to our Saviour after receiving him. In either case, they fail greatly in the respect they owe our Saviour, and commit an additional sin. Every one knows that the faults we are describing must be voluntary to be sinful. But every one should likewise know, that they may be voluntary in the cause, as well as they may be voluntary in themselves. For instance, a person is guilty of them in the cause, when he does not take sufficient care to prepare himself for communion, or sufficiently watch over himself, or guard his senses, during so sacred an action.

To comprehend this fully, it should be recollected, that the blessed Eucharist confers various graces. First, it augments sanctifying grace, and the habits of different virtues, which are called infused virtues. Secondly, it confers actual graces to enlighten our understandings, to inflame our wills, and to excite us to practice virtuous actions. Now, as the augmentation of sanctifying grace is always

greater or less, in just proportion to the dispositions of those who communicate, it is evident, that a person who is actually distracted, while receiving, will receive less graces than another who receives our Saviour with respectful attention and profound adoration.

*Secondly*—As some actual graces are much stronger and more efficacious than others, is it at all possible that our Saviour would confer his chosen and best graces on a man, who is, at that very instant, behaving in a disrespectful manner to his God? He usually distributes his favours with greater or less liberality, as souls are more or less agreeable to him. And what pretence or title can persons have to his liberality, who insult him by a mortifying contempt or neglect, at the very moment that he is coming to visit them, and to heap on them extraordinary favours? It is by their stupidity and folly, that they thus lose the special graces which operate so wonderful a change in the conduct of mankind.

Besides this loss, they deprive their souls of the unction and suavity usually produced in perfect souls, by the communion. They may be justly styled in the language of the scripture, dead flies that corrupt the sweetness of the most precious perfume. This is the opinion of St. Thomas, who says, though a person who receives with distractions commits only a venial sin, and consequently not guilty of the profanation spoken of by Saint Paul, yet these distractions, and this want of actual devotion, deprive us of the spiritual refection which usually follow a good communion. By a spiritual refection, St. Thomas understands the suavity and unction which are felt after a good communion.



Now, a privation of this unction is extremely pernicious to our advancement in perfection.

And indeed it may be asserted, with a great deal of truth, that the want of this unction is one of the principal reasons that mankind do not advance more than they do, in a spiritual life ; for nothing contributes so much as this celestial delight, to disengage our hearts from all sensual pleasures, and to empty them of all inordinate affection to creatures. For this unction renders all other pleasures insipid, and all other happiness contemptible, when compared with it.

Another bad effect follows from this neglect and distraction. Christians who receive in this manner, produce then no act of virtue, and, consequently, do not acquire those holy habits, which contribute so much to make the practice of virtue afterwards so easy to us. To understand this answer, we must distinguish two kinds of habits in our souls, infused habits, and acquired habits. Infused habits are poured into our souls by God himself. Acquired habits are those which we, ourselves, acquire, by corresponding with actual graces, and by producing acts from the habits before infused into us by God. We should likewise remark, that the infused habits give us a power indeed, but never give us a facility of producing these acts ; because, formally and of themselves, they do not mortify our corrupt inclinations, nor diminish the ardour of our passions, nor destroy our vicious habits. All these wonderful effects are produced only by actual graces ; that is, by these brilliant lights, which God sheds on our understanding, and by these charming unctions which God diffuses over our souls. Hence it is, that acquired habits, aided by actual graces, are

the great means by which we mortify our corrupt inclinations, abate the violence of our passions, eradicate evil habits, and surmount all the obstacles that oppose us in the road of virtue. From this explanation, it evidently follows, first, that these imperfect souls we are describing, though they receive some augmentation of the infused habits, yet they produce few or no acts of the great virtues. After communion they are untractable as ever to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost; they find the same difficulties in practising christian virtues, and continue to lead on the same imperfect life they always did before.

The remedy which I would advise a person to use against these faults is, I would advise him to impress the following truth strongly on his mind, by frequently reflecting on them :—

Suppose a man going to visit a friend, whom he tenderly loved; suppose him entering this friend's house, with a countenance irradiated with pleasure, with a heart throbbing with joy, and with the most eager desires of seeing and embracing this friend—suppose this friend receives this man with a frigid air, and in a cool manner; occupies himself with some trifle or other, while the man remains in his company, and scarcely looks at him, or speaks to him. Now, I ask any one acquainted with the human heart, whether such a reception would not disgust the sincerest friend in the world, and freeze his friendship at once into frigid indifference, or great contempt. Yet this is a faithful picture of what passes in tepid or distracted communions. Our Saviour is that faithful friend, who comes down from heaven to visit us. He enters our hearts with hands filled with the greatest favours,

and with a heart burning with the most ardent love. But if we receive him with a cold indifference ; if we scarce deign to look at him or speak to him, while he stays ; is it at all surprising that such a reception should close his hands and freeze his heart ? On the other hand, when he finds a soul attentive to the honour paid it by his visit, and sincerely loving, or at least sincerely wishing to love him ; this soul he tenderly embraces, and heaps many favours on it. This soul, by corresponding faithfully with these graces, produces acts of the most sublime virtues, and acquires the most holy and the most perfect habits. Then, partly by these habits, and partly by the unction of communion, the soul finds the greatest facility in living with sanctity in this life, and arriving to eternal happiness in the next, which I wish, &c.

---

### ON FREQUENT COMMUNION.

THERE is nothing that can contribute to sanctify a parish more than frequent communion. “It is “sincerely to be wished,” said the fathers, assembled in the Council of Trent, “that the christians “of the present times, like the primitive christians, “would participate of this divine mystery, every “day they assist at Mass, not only spiritually, but “also sacramentally. Because, the frequent use “of this divine sacrament is the most efficacious “means they can have here below, to preserve in “them the life of grace, and to insure to them the “life of glory.”

After these words of the Council, no Catholic

can doubt of the necessity and utility of frequent communion. Experience every day confirms this important truth: for we certainly know, that those parishes where frequent communion is established, are, undoubtedly, the most regular, the most fervent, the most irreprehensible, and the most faithful to God, of all others.

The faithful, in their progress through life, absolutely require three things—nourishment, succour, and remedies. Nourishment, to preserve in them the supernatural life of grace; succour, to protect and defend them from their invisible adversaries, and remedies, to cure and preserve them from their spiritual infirmities. Now, these three are certainly contained in the blessed Eucharist. But, to produce these effects completely, it must be received often. For, as we frequently want strength, we frequently stand in need of nourishment; as we are frequently attacked by our enemies, we frequently want help, to defend us from them; and as we are frequently afflicted with the infirmities of our corrupt nature and passions, we have frequent necessity of remedies to cure them.

*First*—Let us represent to our imagination the appearance of a number of people, who were, a long time, almost famished for want of food; their countenances pale, their limbs emaciated, their bodies languid, and their strength decayed. Just so is a parish where this celestial food is seldom received. All their spiritual strength is gone. They are in a state of langour that leads on insensibly to death. They walk, or rather are dragged on slowly in the road of salvation; all fervour of piety is extinct there; all the virtues cease to be practised, and all the vices reign triumphantly there

For certain it is, and allowed by all Catholic divines, that in this particular there exists a striking analogy between the body and the soul. The body not nourished, nor strengthened by food, insensibly becomes weak, languid, and is finally destroyed. In like manner the soul, deprived a long time of the Eucharist, which, according to our Saviour, is its spiritual nourishment, weakens, languishes, and soon dies away.

One of the reasons which, probably, induced our Saviour to institute the Eucharist, under the appearance of bread, was to signify, by this, the necessity we are under of frequently using it. Bread is the ordinary food of mankind; it must be frequently used, or the body will be soon self-destroyed by its natural heat. The Eucharist was meant, by our Saviour, to be our chief spiritual food. Therefore, without frequently using it, the soul is in constant danger of losing the supernatural life of grace.

It was this consideration that led St. Ambrose to reproach his people, in these remarkable words: *si quotidianus panis, cur post annum sumis* "But you say you are not always prepared to eat this celestial food. The Holy Father replies, you should live in such a manner as to be always prepared to receive it. At least you should receive it every Sunday. On that day disengaged from temporal occupations, no other obstacle should prevent you from benefiting of this adorable mystery. He adds; he that is not worthy of frequent communion, is not worthy of paschal communion; and he that does not merit to receive often, does not merit to receive even once in his life."

Another reason that should stimulate us to receive often is, that the Eucharist does not produce its great effects in any but those who receive it often. Hence it is, that we see worldlings, who receive it but once a year, are scarcely changed at all for the better in their morals, and that they continue to live on still in the same habits, vices and irregularities. Whereas, on the other hand, those who frequent it often, shew clearly an amendment in their conduct, a progress in perfection, a fervour in the practice of the virtues, and a fidelity in the observance of the commandments.

In the gospel, the sacred table of the communion is represented to us by our Saviour himself as a splendid feast, in which he displayed all the omnipotence of his power, and all the liberality of his goodness. And one of the remarkable directions which he has given to the *evangelical pastor is, to invite the faithful, and, if necessary, to force them to come to this feast.* *Compelle intrare.* If they peremptorily refuse to come, and you cannot prevail on them by the exertion of all your authority to do so, tell them from me, that they shall be eternally banished from my presence, and shall never partake of my celestial banquet, in my mansions of glory. And who can say that this reprobation is not justly denounced against such obdurate sinners, for the insults they offer our Saviour, by corresponding so ill with the infinite love he testifies to mankind in this sacrament, and by esteeming so little so precious a gift, and, in itself, truly inestimable.

Catholics are absolutely obliged, by the tenets of their religion, to believe that our Saviour is really present in this sacrament—his body, blood, soul,

and divinity—and there is no Catholic but believes it. Who, then, could be easily brought to believe, if daily experience did not convince him of the fatal truth, that Catholics, thus believing, should be urged, impelled, commanded, and, even threatened, in order to oblige him to taste this, the most delicious of all foods, to drink this, the most exquisite of all liquors, to receive this, the most invaluable of all presents? Who could believe that violent measures would be necessary to make him receive a sacrament, composed of the Divinity itself, where omnipotence attempts to beggar itself, by giving away all, and reserving nothing, which is, certainly, done in a certain sense, because God gives away and bestows himself.

If we reflected a little on this sacrament, and on its extraordinary benefits, would not gratitude for our Saviour, and a proper attention to our eternal interest, urge us to receive it with all the eagerness, with all the ardour, with all the affection, and all the tenderness our poor hearts are capable of? With these dispositions, we would not confine ourselves to receive it once or twice a year. We would soon learn, by pleasing experience, that it is to those who receive often, and receive well, that God manifests his goodness, his kindness, his love, in this sacrament. When we have a true desire to receive him, he abundantly satisfies our desires. When we wish to receive him with love, he amply repays love for love. On the other hand, God does not ordinarily communicate himself to those who come to him but seldom, and who receive him reluctantly, without desire, and without fervour. These are the sentiments of Saint Gregory; and Saint Augustine tells us, that our greatest pleasure in this life

should consist in receiving this food, and our greatest grief, to be deprived of it.

*Secondly*—Strength is received from the communion. We know well both by faith and experience, that the devil is perpetually going round us, seeking to devour us; that he is constantly laying snares for us, frequently inclining us to evil, and tempting us to sin, in order to make us accomplices in his crimes, and companions in his misery. We likewise know that our own corrupt nature is easily seduced to combine with him against God, and our eternal happiness. Hence, it is necessary to oppose against these temptations, and their causes, something more powerful than our corrupt nature, superior to the devil, and to all the powers of hell. What is this? God, himself, in the blessed Eucharist; for as a city besieged by a powerful and skilful and vigorous army will, at last, in spite of its fortifications, and the valour of its defenders, be taken, if not relieved by an army still more powerful than the besiegers. In like manner, our souls, though fortified by prayer, and the virtues we have acquired, will, at last, yield to the repeated assaults of the devil, if not relieved by the Eucharist. This will infuse internal strength to resist and communicate external succours to repulse the enemy, and consequently, secure to us a glorious victory. But, if we delay too long to procure this succour, the devil enters, and takes possession of our soul, strengthens himself there daily, and rules us like a tyrant, and is not, then, easily dislodged. To drive him out again, many the attack must be made, many the violence must be used. We must have recourse to extraordinary means, particularly to frequent confession and communion.



*Thirdly*—A remedy. For though the divine Eucharist is possessed with an efficacy and power infinite in itself, yet this efficacy is not communicated to us at once, but by certain degrees; and though one communion alone might suffice to cure all our infirmities, to vanquish all our enemies, and to resist all their attacks, yet Providence attached all these effects to frequent communion only; for, by frequent communion, we receive not common graces, but chosen graces; special graces, triumphant graces; graces that communicate to us not only the power of combating, but infallibly renders us victorious over all our enemies.

Any infirmity, any sickness, especially an inveterate one, is seldom cured by the first application of any remedy, however powerful. To produce a radical cure, these remedies must be repeatedly applied: they should be aptly suited, and exactly proportioned to the disorder. Now, according to St. Augustin, there exists an infirmity on earth among all the sons of men, which nothing but a heavenly physician can cure, nothing but heavenly remedies can heal. And this infirmity is human nature corrupted by sin, weakened by a diminution of graces, and languid by the constant agitation of passions. Evils of such magnitude, and of such dangerous consequences, require frequent and powerful remedies, especially as these disorders can never be entirely eradicated in this world, as they are interwoven in our very constitution, depraved by sin. These remedies can be only derived from frequent confession, and frequent communion.

Persons who seldom commit a venial sin deliberately, who apply themselves seriously and earnestly to acquire perfection, who diligently endea-

vour to mortify their passions and senses, and who prepare themselves, with care and fervour, for communion, may communicate oftener than every eight days.

Persons who commit no sin deliberately, who have no deliberate affection to venial sin, to the world, or to themselves; who have a great love for God, and who seek him and his will in all things, may communicate daily.

---

### ON THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

THE confraternity of the blessed Sacrament is an association of the faithful, who unite in a body, to honour our blessed Saviour in the Eucharist. I can say, with truth and propriety, that such an association is as ancient as the church itself; because, the great devotion of true christians impelled them, at all times, to honour the divine Eucharist as much as possible. It was principally for this purpose, that the primitive christians assembled daily, according to Saint Luke. They assembled a long time privately, because the persecutions raised against them, prevented them from assembling publicly. But, as soon as peace was restored to the church, as soon as emperors, kings, and princes became christians, the true faithful pressed eagerly forward, to pay their homage to our divine Saviour, in the temples built to his honour. About one thousand years after the institution of the blessed sacrament, when the piety of christians became less fervent, and when some impious sects were

broached by blasphemous wretches, against the blessed Eucharist, the church instituted a particular feast, in honour of it. The faith of christians was animated afresh by this, and soon produced associations of the pious, to honour this adorable mystery, called the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. A confraternity dear to God, precious in the eyes of the church, and highly advantageous to all who sincerely become members of it. I wish I could impress on the minds of all who hear me, the strong conviction I have myself, of the truth of what I have here advanced. I shall contribute to it, I hope, by offering to your consideration some reflections on the object, the end, and the benefits of the confraternity of the blessed sacrament.

And *first*, the object—What is the object of this confraternity? It is Jesus Christ, present for the love of us, in the divine Eucharist. It is the Holy of Holies, it is the Son of God made man for our sake; consequently, an object infinitely respectable, infinitely worthy of all our adoration, whatever condition we consider him in; but especially in the divine Eucharist. For the real presence of our blessed Saviour in the divine Eucharist, is, assuredly, the greatest of all wonders; and, to a grateful heart, the most powerful incentive to love and adoration.

To be convinced of this, consider that God has done the most striking, the most extraordinary, and the most miraculous things, in order to testify his great love to man; and you must, after all, say, that the adorable Sacrament is an abridgment of all these wonders, and a perpetual proof of a love still greater. God formerly made his chosen people

walk across the Red Sea; he nourished them miraculously in the desert, with food from heaven; he conducted them as a guide, in their journey to the land of Canaan; he made his divine Majesty sensible to them on Mount Sinai, in the midst of thunder and lightning. These, I must own, are extraordinary proofs of his love to man. However, I confidently assert, that our Saviour, in the Eucharist, gives us more extraordinary proofs of his love, than all these combined together. The Creator of mankind obeys the voice of a simple priest, and descends on our altars for our sake, though he is there exposed to all the sacrilegious insults and profanations of the impious and ungrateful. This master, infinitely great, is content to conceal the splendour of his Divine Majesty, under the humiliating appearances of bread and wine, in order to be the spiritual nourishment of our souls. This God-man is produced, at the same time, in places almost innumerable, and in a space almost indivisible, to bestow himself lavishly on all his children. He remains day and night on our altars, to be really present with us, and seems entirely to forget what is due to his Divine Majesty, and to think only on what is for our good, in this adorable mystery. A mind reflecting on this, is confounded, is bewildered in a maze of such multiplied wonders: for, would it not seem sufficient, that God should become man for our sake, in order to redeem us? At least, would it not be sufficient that this God-man should shed the last drop of his blood to save us? For these two things are so extraordinary, that the most impudent person living would never presume to ask the one, nor the

most credulous believe the other, if both had not really happened. Yet, our Divine Saviour was not satisfied with all these extraordinary proofs of his love for us. He was not content with becoming man for our sake. He was not content with shedding the last drop of his blood for us. He must still continue to give us his very body and blood, for our spiritual nourishment, to the end of the world.

Although the love our Saviour testifies to us, in this Sacrament, be surprising and incomprehensible, yet, could not I assert, with justice, that the indifference, the neglect, the ingratitude of the faithful to him, in it, is nearly as surprising, and as incomprehensible? It certainly is astonishing and inconceivable, that God should love us, and prove this love to us, in so extraordinary a manner, as he does here. We can only say, that it is God that loves us, and that he loves as a God. But still, is it not a mystery of stupid and hard-hearted iniquity, not easily conceived, that a Catholic should repay, with neglect and indifference, this great love, in the very Sacrament which so effectually, and so wonderfully, proves this extreme love to us?

If a Heretic, a Turk, a Jew, or Barbarian, knew our belief, would they not be astonished how little we love our Saviour, or how little we shew our love to him in this divine Sacrament. We all know, that we can do him no good, that we can add nothing to his intrinsic happiness, that he stands in no need of us; yet still he loves us so much, that he wishes to remain day and night with us, for our own good, and so to continue to the end of the world, in an obscure degrading manner, under the contemptible appearances of bread and wine, on

our altars. On the other hand, man cannot do, or even think, of any good thing without him, and still he thinks very little of the honour and advantage of his presence among us. So little do we love him, and so poor an idea have we of the happiness of possessing him. We all must own this miserable truth; especially if we consider, that if each person here present, had as many hearts as there are men, women, and children in the world, and that each heart loved our Saviour as much as all the saints and angels in heaven do together, still all this love would be nothing, or next to nothing, if compared to the love he merits from us, even in the Blessed Sacrament. For, though God be omnipotent, and, consequently, can do every thing, yet God, with all the power of omnipotence, could produce nothing more worthy of love, respect and adoration, than the Blessed Eucharist.

*Secondly*—What is the end or purpose of it? Catholics, by their holy religion, are taught that our Saviour resides in this Holy Sacrament, to be our guide, our strength, our comfort, and our nourishment. This is such a miracle of goodness, of love, and of tenderness, that man can never sufficiently repay. Is it not, then, horribly unnatural, and ungrateful in man, to repay all this love, and all this tenderness, with nothing but neglect and impiety? The church, deeply affected with this monstrous and unnatural conduct of her children, has instituted the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. She wished, hereby, that the zeal and fervour of the faithful, in this Confraternity, should make some reparation to our Saviour for the ingratitude and iniquity of her other careless, ungrateful,

and impious children. She wished that they should be like the life-guards of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in order to protect his sacred humanity, in this Sacrament. She wished that they should not only testify their own veneration and respect for our Saviour, whenever he descended among us, but that they should also excite, by their example, the faithful at large to pay to him the adoration and homage so justly due to him in this adorable mystery.

What are the advantages of this confraternity? Many and inestimable, to the whole Church, to every Parish where it is established, and, particularly, to every one that is a member of it.

*First*—To the whole Church. For what can contribute more essentially to the advantage of the Catholic religion and Church, than a lively faith in her doctrines, and especially in her mysteries. Among these mysteries, the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and the real Presence of our Saviour in the Eucharist, justly hold the first place. And can any thing human produce, nourish, and increase this lively faith more than an institution, whose chief end is, to give constant and external proofs of a lively faith, and to excite others to follow so laudable an example in this particular. I look upon it, truly, as a mark of God's special providence to his Church, that when Protestants blasphemed the Blessed Eucharist, that numbers of faithful Catholics should rise, enlist themselves as volunteers, and unite themselves in a body, to defend and support our Saviour's honour, in the Blessed Eucharist. The design of robbing us of this most precious of all our treasures, the most Adorable of our Sacraments, roused the zeal, animated the faith, and in-

creased the piety of the faithful, in the Catholic Church.

*Secondly*—To every Parish where it is established. And here I have no necessity of adducing lengthened discussions, to prove this point. For, thanks be to God, I need only appeal to facts—to notorious facts, and to the very experience of those who hear me.

Will not every unprejudiced person here allow, that it has produced a great change in the morals of the people, in every Parish where it has been established for any time? Are not the people more enlightened in the ways of God in these Parishes, than in others? Are they not better instructed in their religion? Is not devotion more common? Is not piety more generally diffused among all ages? Are not injustices, disputes and quarrels less common? Are not the Sundays and Holydays observed better? I can declare, myself, and declare it with confidence and gratitude to God, that I know, from my own experience, that all these advantages I have mentioned, and more than I think it necessary to specify, have been known to result from its establishment in several Parishes.

*Lastly*—What are the advantages to each member of it? Without dwelling on the temporal advantages, on the particular care which our Saviour takes in every thing that regards the family, the health, the reputation of the members of this Confraternity, I shall only insist on the many spiritual advantages each member can reasonably expect to receive. These advantages consist in receiving numberless special graces for conduct, sanctification, and final perseverance. Our Saviour's words are plain, peremptory and formal. He has pr



mised to assist all those who will come to him. What assistance, then, will he not grant to those who make it a rule, a duty, to go to see him often, to visit him with fervour, with humility, with respect. He has informed us that whoever will love him, his father, who is in heaven, will love that person, and that he and his father will come and dwell with him. He has likewise said to us, that whoever honours the Son will be honoured by his Father. Now, how can Christians here below, prove externally that love to him, or honour him more efficaciously, than in the Blessed Sacrament, where he personally resides or is corporeally present? It is true we, in some degree, love and honour him, when we love our neighbour, and honour those, whom he has commanded us to love and honour. But, in the Blessed Sacrament, this honour is paid directly to himself; it not only terminates ultimately in him, but tends immediately to him, and is, consequently, entitled by his never-erring promise, to a great, special, and to a particular reward. Of many pious christians who may look for this reward, who can so justly claim it as those, who dedicate themselves particularly to honour him, in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us illustrate this by an example. Suppose a great King's son, reduced, by a combination of extraordinary events, to a mean, degraded, and abject state. Such a Prince, when he comes to power, if he have honour and gratitude, must sensibly feel, and, consequently, reward, any compliment, any honour paid to him, in his reduced condition; but if a body of men, with a pure intention, form themselves into a society, to serve him, to honour him, to love him; if they enrol themselves as volunteers, to protect his person, to secure him from out-

rage, to repair, by an increased respect, the insults offered him, and to exoite, by their example, the giddy unthinking world, to pay him the homage so justly due to him; what favours, what rewards, has not such a society of men just reason to hope for? Every one can easily apply this example to our present subject. It is readily comprehended, that the prince in a degraded state, is our Saviour, in the Blessed Eucharist, and that the Confraternity is the society alluded to.

*Secondly*—Our sanctification and final perseverance. For it is an undoubted fact, confirmed by the experience of all ages and places, that the members of this Confraternity receive the Blessed Sacrament oftener, and are better prepared for it, than any other body or society whatsoever. Now, this consideration alone, abstracting from all others, should induce any one who had a regard for his salvation, to desire to become a member of it.

---

*On the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament,  
continued.*

WE are taught by faith, and are most sincerely obliged to believe it, that Jesus Christ our Saviour, is really present in the Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine. We should, likewise, be persuaded, that he remains on our altars, as on a throne of love and mercy, to communicate thence his graces to us, and to shew the love he has for us, by remaining day and night concealed amongst us. When the Church instituted the feast of the

Blessed Sacrament, she had two objects principally in view.

*First*—To induce the faithful, at a certain appointed season, by their devotion, their thanksgiving, their respect, their veneration, and their homage, to acknowledge and honour this amiable presence of our God amongst us.

*Secondly*—To repair, in some measure, by magnificent processions and multiplied expositions, the numberless insults, and cruel outrages offered in the course of the year, to the adorable Body and Blood of our Saviour. The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament was piously and prudently instituted for views of a similar nature. We know, from the inspired writings, that he delights to remain among the sons of men.

If gratitude for such extraordinary goodness, such signal condescension in the son of God, will not stimulate us to pay him the respect, the homage, and the love we owe him, though concealed from our sight, yet a regard to our own everlasting interest will prove, I hope, a powerful incentive to every christian who piously aspires to perfection, to pay his frequent tribute of veneration and respect to our God, in the Blessed Sacrament. I believe you will, readily, acknowledge, that it is greatly our interest to visit, frequently, the Blessed Sacrament, when I shall relate to you some instances of extraordinary favours, received by those who devoutly visited this Adorable Mystery. But, let me previously observe to you, that these narratives are not collected from legendary records, neither warranted nor sealed by respectable authority. No: they are the humble and grateful acknow-

ledgments of the Saints themselves, of whom they are related by other Saints who knew them.

And first, Saint Mary Magdalen, of Pazzi, relates, that she was ordered, by our Saviour himself, to pay a visit to him thirty-three times each day, in the Blessed Sacrament; and this highly-favoured Saint never omitted this practice the remaining part of her life, while she was able to go perform it.

The celebrated missionary and pious servant of God, Lewis Lanueza, of Sicily, before he entirely renounced the world, and even in his tender years, was so devoted to his Saviour, that it was with the greatest difficulty he could tear himself away from his presence in the Blessed Sacrament: such were the extatic delights that he felt there. His confessor ordered him never to stay longer than one hour at each visit, and when that time had elapsed, he shewed evident signs of great repugnance to quit his Saviour.

St. Louis Gonzaga, likewise, felt such raptures in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and remained there so long, that his confessor was also obliged to order him not to spend too much time there. He departed with as much pain, and offered himself as great violence to obey this order, as if his soul was separating from his body.

Saint Francis Xavier, when in India, after extraordinary toils and fatigues, came always to the Blessed Sacrament, to seek repose.

He spent the whole day in labouring in his mission, and frequently after spent the whole night in prayer, before the Blessed Sacrament, and left it then comforted, composed, and refreshed.

St. John F. Regis made this devotion to the

and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to testify to him our love and gratitude, for condescending to come down from heaven and become man for our sake; and for having in a manner annihilated himself, as it were, in this adorable Sacrament, for the spiritual nourishment of our souls.

Our second motive should be, to repair, by our homage, the numberless insults and outrages daily offered to him in this divine Sacrament, by the profanations and sacrileges of unworthy communicants and unbelievers.

Our third motive should be, to thank him for his daily favours, and to petition him for still more, both for ourselves, and for others.

Our fourth motive should be, to seek comfort when we are in trouble or affliction, by begging to be delivered from it, if it be his holy will, or by offering it to him, or by making a proper use of it, for his greater glory, and our own salvation.

Lastly, we should go there in a penitential spirit, humbly to acknowledge our faults and crimes, and to implore his pardon for them.

The manner of doing this is, when we are before the blessed Sacrament, we should, with profound veneration, acknowledge the presence of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Sacrament; humbly adore it, and then, offer up our petitions. Before we depart, we should thank him with humility and gratitude, for permitting us to remain in his presence, notwithstanding our sins, and to beg his blessing.

## RULES.

1.—The brothers and sisters of the venerable Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament will endeavour to have themselves, and to inspire others with great devotion and profound veneration for the precious Body and Blood of our Lord, contained in this august Sacrament.

2.—They are obliged, if not sick, or absent from town, to appear in the dress of the order, and receive the Holy Communion on the following days, viz.—Christmas day, Easter Sunday, Ascension Thursday, Pentecost Sunday, Corpus Christi, and All Saints' day, and to assist at the procession, on the feast of Corpus Christi.

3.—They are to confess and receive, at least once a month.

4.—They are to hear mass every day, especially on Thursday, as that day is peculiarly dedicated to the commemoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This rule comprehends not those who are sick, or lawfully hindered.

5.—Such as can read, and are bound to no other office, are obliged to say, daily, the office of the Blessed Sacrament. Those who cannot read, are bound, instead of the office, to say three Paters, and Aves daily, for the intention publicly declared to them. Those who can read, and are before engaged to say another office, are required to say, daily, the Pange Lingua, and the Oration.

6.—The brothers and sisters, on their entering any chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament is reposed, will profoundly adore the Blessed Sacrament, before they begin any prayer.

7.—They are bound, in a most special manner, never to pronounce without great respect, the sacred name of God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost, as also, the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ.

8.—Those who conveniently can, should visit the Blessed Sacrament every day.

9.—Those who can read should apply themselves in a very particular manner, to instruct children to receive worthily their first communion.

10.—The sick brothers and sisters should be visited and read to, by persons of their own sex. It is strongly recommended, and devoutly to be wished, that the brothers and sisters, in their respective neighbourhoods, should visit, and read to all the sick, though not of the confraternity; those who have contagious disorders excepted.

11.—At the decease of a brother or a sister, if he, or she, were an inhabitant of this city, or of its suburbs, all the brethren and sisters of the city and suburbs, who can conveniently assist, should attend at the Bishop's Mass, to pray for the soul of such deceased brother or sister. Also, each brother or sister, whether in town or country, should offer, on the first Sunday of the month following, the plenary indulgence they then obtain, for the repose of the soul of such brother or sister.

Irregular members to be expelled.

---

## ON THE DESIRE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

THE first and most necessary step, dear Christians we should make, in the road of goodness, is

an ardent, an earnestly sincere desire of Christian perfection; "for the beginning of wisdom is the most true desire of discipline." This desire of perfection, is, therefore, the great spring that sets the spiritual machine in motion. It must be a most sincere desire. It must not be a barren complaisance, a mere liking for the beauty of virtue. No: it must be a practical desire, a desire which impels us to undertake every thing to acquire perfection, to refuse ourselves every thing, to suffer every thing, provided that we can hereby arrive to this wished for degree of perfection.

The reason of this is, because the work of perfection depends, first, on the will of God, who gives his powerful succour of grace to man; and secondly, on the will of man himself, who co-operates with his best endeavours, with the graces he receives.

Now, the Almighty, in order to communicate his graces to us without measure, insists on, as a necessary condition, that we should have a most ardent desire to receive them. Form you your desires, and I will satisfy them, says he, by the royal psalmist. He requires that our soul should be like land parched up, thirsting for his grace to pour its torrents down on it. *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.* This conduct of God appears evidently just, even to our weak understandings. For why should he throw away his most precious gifts on a man who would not vouchsafe even to wish or desire them, much less to a man, who gives plain proofs by his conduct, that he neither esteems nor wants them. For the ordinary rule which God follows, in distributing his graces is, that we should form lively and frequent desires of obtaining them.



Hence, St. Thomas says, that desires put a man in a state to obtain what he desires; and St. Augustine says, to the same purpose, that by desiring, we shall be enabled to receive what we desire.

A great desire of perfection is not only necessary, in order to incline God to communicate to us his graces, but it is also necessary, on our own part, that we may co-operate with the graces God gives us. When a man of courage sees a difficulty before him, he knows he can never surmount it, without an ardour equal to that difficulty. Would those who traverse oceans in quest of riches, ever expose themselves to all the toils and dangers of long and hazardous voyages, if a desire of riches did not encourage and support them? Just so, a Christian who ardently wishes for perfection, will act in proportion to the strength of his desires. He will omit none of the means that appear useful to him, to attain this end, and no obstacle will appear great enough to stop him in his way. Nay more: far from being discouraged by difficulties, he redoubles his courage, and augments his esteem for his treasure, the possession of which would never cost so much trouble, if the value of it was not greater than the value of any thing else beside.

*First*—The desire of perfection is a great proof, that the soul is in favour and grace before God.

St. Bernard says so, and proves it from these words—These that eat me, shall hunger again, &c.

St. Bernard says likewise, that every time he reflected on these words, “A man does not know whether he be worthy of love or hatred,” his mind was filled with anxiety. If such a Saint trembled, what anxious fears should we not have? In the midst of these fears, it should be a great consola-

tion to us to have some proof, probable at least, that we are the children of love. This probability we have, when we feel a great desire of perfection. This may be further proved from the Scripture: "The way of the just man is like the sun," &c. On the contrary, the way of the lukewarm is like the setting sun, &c.

*Secondly*—A good method to advance to perfection is, never to think of the virtues we have acquired, but always to think on the virtues we still want.

The Scripture says, that he who is just should become still more just, and he that is holy should become still more holy.

St. Jerome and the venerable Bede say, that our Saviour, in saying, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, wished to let us know that we should never think ourselves sufficiently just.

The Apostle St. Paul says, my brethren, I don't believe that I have attained perfection, but one thing I do, that forgetting always what is behind, and advancing to what is before me, I endeavour to reach the goal, and carry away the prize to which we are called, and invited in Jesus Christ. Reflect on these words, and on the saint who used them.

Saint Basil, St. Jerome, and indeed all the Saints, give the same advice.

Saint Bernard recommends to us, in our pursuit of perfection, the methods merchants use who are desirous to acquire great riches.

It is absolutely necessary not to neglect the smallest things: For, "he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." These words contain an important lesson for all who aspire to perfection. In important matters we are apt enough to pay due attention, and not neglect them;

but it is not so in small matters ; we are easily led to neglect and think slightly of them. This is a grievous mistake, according to the words of the Holy Ghost, above quoted. To impress it strongly on our minds, let us hear the Holy Fathers.

Saint Bernard says, that these who plunge themselves into the deepest disorders, begin first by the most trifling faults. No one ever arrives, but by degrees, to the extremes of wickedness or to the summit of perfection.

First, we become relaxed in matters of small consequence. Our fervour diminished, we become still more cold, till by thus continuing, we cause God to withdraw his protecting hand from us, and then, being no longer supported, we infallibly sink under the first violent temptation. This made St. Gregory say, that small faults and sins are more dangerous than great ones ; because, great sins are easily known and carefully shunned, not so with small ones.

Saint Chrysostom says, I will venture to advance a proposition, which may, perhaps, appear surprising, viz.—that we should sometimes take less pains to avoid great sins than small ones ; for great sins, of themselves, naturally excite a horror in our mind, but the others being small, become familiar, then habitual, and, at last, lead us to the greatest extremes of vice. Another reason why we should be attentive to small sins is, that there is every reason to fear that our relaxation may provoke God to withdraw from us his special graces : when these are withdrawn, we can make no progress in perfection, nor even preserve ourselves long from falling into sin.

To comprehend this fully, let it be observed,

that, according to Saint Paul, God grants to every one sufficient grace to conquer every temptation, even the most violent. Besides this general grace, which God grants to every body, there is a special, and efficacious grace, which he grants to some only. It is true, that helped by the general grace only, we may conquer temptations; but it is likewise as true, that we often sink under temptation, when assisted by it alone. But by special grace, which is a particular favour of God, flowing from his pure liberality, we are ever victorious over all temptations. To whom does he, then, give these special graces? To those who have noble and generous sentiments to please him in every thing, whether great or small, whether in works of duty or in works of supererogation, to those who aspire to perfection *in every thing*.

*Firstly*—Our advancing in perfection consists in performing well our ordinary actions.

Do well, said our Lord, in Deuteronomy. The people, speaking of our Saviour, said, "he has done all things well." It is an undoubted truth, that the good or bad state of our soul consists in the goodness or badness of our actions. For, it is by the quality of our actions that we will be judged.

The tree, says the Scripture, is known by its fruits; and in another place, "by their fruits you shall know them." Our actions tell not only what we are in this life, but announce to us, beforehand, what we are to be in the life to come. For the royal Prophet says, that the Lord will judge each according to his works. And Saint Paul says, "what a man has sown during his life, he shall reap after his death."

*Secondly*—But what are those actions on which

our perfection depends? They are our ordinary actions, and what we do every day. For example, to pray, examine our conscience, hear mass, practice penance and mortification, acquit ourselves of the duties of our state. In short, to perform well our most common and most familiar actions. If we do these in a perfect manner, we shall be perfect christians; but if we do them imperfectly, we shall be imperfect christians. The difference, therefore, between a perfect and imperfect christian, does not consist in this, that the perfect does more good actions than the imperfect, but that he does them in a better manner. The conclusion we should draw from this is, that our perfection consists in things so easy, that we should be greatly animated and encouraged to acquire it. For, if we could not arrive to perfection, but by sublime and difficult paths, by great elevations of the mind, and by profound meditation, most people might allege, as a just excuse, that they had no capacity for such things. In like-manner, if we were all obliged to wear hair shirts, to discipline ourselves severely, to fast rigorously; several might, with good reason, say, that they had neither health nor disposition to perform such extraordinary things. But, to be perfect, these things are not required of every body. Let us perform our usual actions well, and no more is required of us. God himself, speaking to his people in Deuteronomy says.\* Saint Anthony, speaking to his

\* "The commandment which I give you to-day, consists not in any thing above your reach, nor is it far from you; it is not in heaven, whereby you might excuse yourself, saying, who is able to ascend to heaven to bring it from thence, to the end that we may hear and fulfil it? Nor is it any thing beyond the sea, so that one may complain and say, who of us is able to

disciples says,\* &c. It may be asked, then, how shall we perform well our ordinary actions? The performing well our ordinary actions requires two things. The first and principal is, to do them purely for God. The second, that we use all possible care to do them well—when we perform our actions purely for God, whether we are in public or private, the desire we have to please God will stimulate us to give all possible perfection to our actions. The saints advise us, as an excellent method to succeed in this, to keep ourselves always in the presence of God—to consider that he sees every act of ours, and that his looks penetrate into the inmost folds and most secret recesses of our hearts. We hereby are spurred on to watch all our looks, thoughts, words, and actions, and to be cautiously circumspect in what we wish for, in what we do, in what

“cross the sea to bring it, to the end that we may hear  
 “and perform what is required of us? But it is a thing  
 “very near you, a precept with which you often enter-  
 “tain yourself, which you have often in your mouth, of  
 “which the execution depends upon no other but your  
 “own heart.”—*Deut.* 30. 11, 15.

\* Saint Anthony, when exhorting his disciples, said,  
 “The Greeks who devoted themselves to the study of  
 “wisdom, undertook great voyages, and underwent  
 “great hardships by sea and land to attain it. But you  
 “to acquire virtue, which is true wisdom, are not  
 “obliged to go so far, nor to expose yourselves to such  
 “great dangers: you need not even go out of your cells,  
 “for there you will find it, or rather *the kingdom of God*  
 “*is within you*. It is in such things as are most fami-  
 “liar to you, and that you do every day; in which,  
 “your perfection consists;” and again, when this saint  
 “was near his death, and his disciples waiting his last  
 “advice, he said: “begin, continue, and conclude every  
 “day, as if you were certain it should be the last day of  
 “your life.”

we desire, and in what we love. Another method of doing our actions well is, to do each of them so as if we had nothing else to do in the world but that act alone. If saying our prayers, for example, we should fix our attention so to prayer, as to think of nothing else beside; not to think of our business, of our employments, or of the duties of our condition or calling. In short, in all our good works let us attach ourselves entirely and exclusively, to the action we are doing, and think of nothing else while we are doing it. Another method the saints teach us is, to perform each of our actions, so as if that action were to be the last of our lives. Saint Basil, Saint Bernard, Saint Anthony, and Thomas a Kempis, all agree in advising this rule. They observe, that when a man is going to do any action, he should reflect within himself, whether he would perform that act, or, in such a manner, if he were assured he would die immediately after. They add, that we should always have our last end before our eyes. When we rise in the morning, we should prepare ourselves to live as if that day were to be the last of our lives, and in the same manner at night. If we use this precaution, death can never surprise us. And we may rationally expect these comfortable words of our Saviour. Happy the servant whom his Lord shall find prepared when he comes. Many saints remark that it is a particular mark of the mercy of God that he has concealed from us the hour of our death, in order that we should be always, and at all times, prepared to die. For if we knew precisely the time of our death, we would sin on securely, till near the time; when even now, uncertain as we are of the moment, we live without remorse, and

sin without fear. The last method is, that in doing our actions, we never look beyond the present day; for it is a dangerous temptation which the devil makes use of to discourage those who are beginning to walk in the road of perfection, to make them reflect on the long time they have to live in mortifying themselves, in depriving themselves of the pleasures of this life, in severely watching their thoughts, words and actions. The infernal seducer places all these things before the eyes and imaginations of a beginner, and, by magnifying difficulties, endeavours to inspire him with notions, that he never will be able to continue a long time in the practice of duties which appear so rigid. Now, to oppose this artifice of the devil, it is a good method, and proportioned to our weakness, not to consider that we are to serve God still many years, or even many days. Let us confine our thoughts of serving him to this very day. And who, amongst us, has not courage enough to say, that he is able and willing to serve God for one day.

By this method things will become easier to a beginner, which otherwise would appear frightful to him, and often impracticable. This last method should be considered as relating to beginners in the way of perfection alone; for habits long indulged, and our vicious inclinations, renders the practice of virtue difficult to beginners. But, the first difficulties surmounted, and habits of virtue once formed, we advance smoothly, easily, and insensibly. Hence, Ecclesiastious says, "I have laboured a little, and I have found a profound repose." And Saint Paul says likewise, "all discipline or practice of virtue seems, at first, to give more trouble than pleasure; but those who are accustomed to it, reap, in peace, the fruits of justice." Google



## *On the Intention of our Actions.*

THE greater glory of God is the only end we should propose to ourselves in all our actions. This every one, I believe, is convinced of; but, perhaps, every one does not know how to reduce this to practice.

First then: In the morning, we should refer to God all the thoughts, words and actions of the day, and beg his grace to do them all, purely for his honour and glory. Afterwards, when vain glory would fain come in for a share, we may reject the suggestion with truth, by saying, "you have come too late, I have given all before to God." So much would be a good deal, but would not be sufficient; for we should accustom ourselves, never to begin any action of importance, without actually referring it to the greater honour and glory of God.

We should here, says a pious and saintly man, imitate skilful builders, who never lay an important stone in a building without applying their square, and that as often as is necessary, 'till the stone be fixed. In like manner should we do: after having offered in the beginning each action to God, we should, from time to time, renew our offering to him by saying, my God, it is for you I do this action, because you command it, because you desire it.

*Second*—We should never examine, with any discomposure of mind, what charge, what employment, what station of life we are fixed in, or what we are commanded to do, provided they be just and honest. Let us only seek to do the will of God and procure his glory in all things—St. Basil teaches this rule. He says, a christian in all his conduct should propose to himself only one end, the glory of God. Therefore whether we eat or drink, or whatever else we do, we should do all for the greater glory of God.

From what has been said we can easily infer, that if the employments we are engaged in cause great distractions in our minds, or bring any relaxation in our practice, the fault does not proceed from our employments, but from ourselves; because we do not acquit ourselves as we ought, in doing them: we confine ourselves to the external part, to the surface of the action, without attending to the interior of it, the soul of it, if I may say so, which is, the will of God.

Hence, action and prayer may be easily reconciled, for sincere prayer helps greatly to do our actions well; and our actions performed as they ought, assist us considerably to pray well. For external actions, employing only the body, leave the mind free to think on, and pray to God.

*Thirdly*—Our actions performed in this manner, may be called full and complete actions. St. Jerome and St. Gregory both remark, that scripture, when speaking of persons who live thus, says, that they have lived full days, and that they died full of days, though they died young. Thus, the fourth chap. of wisdom says, “the little time he has lived, he has filled a great space of time.” And in the seventieth psalm, “they will find in them full days.” The days, therefore, of the true servants of God, are to them twenty-four hours complete. They permit no hour of their life to be empty or idle, because they employ every hour, every moment, in doing the will of God.

*Fourthly*—God may be served from several motives; for instance, of fear, of hope, and of love. To serve God through fear cannot be blameable, because the Royal Prophet prays the Lord to penetrate his flesh with fear. To serve him through hope is

highly commendable; because he that hopeth in the Lord shall never be confounded. Therefore we can avail ourselves both of hope and fear, to excite ourselves to do good, and to avoid evil. But St. Paul wishes and desires us to act with more noble views, and through more noble motives. Aspire, says he, to more perfect gifts, and I will point out to you a more excellent way. He wishes that we would serve God and seek him purely for his own sake, on account of his infinite goodness, and the excellence of his perfections. In a word, because he is God, and a being infinitely perfect.

St. Basil, St. Jerome, and St. Bernard concur in advising that we should not serve God, merely through a hope of being recompensed for our service. For that is the characteristic of a mercenary, who acts through interest, rather than of an affectionate child who acts through love. There is a great difference, say they, between the service of a slave, the service of a mercenary or hireling, and the service of one's child. The slave serves his master through fear of being punished; the hireling serves him through hope of being paid; but the good child serves him through pure love. Now, St. John says, that we are called, and are truly, the children of God. As we are then, truly, the children of God; as we with reason call God our Father, and Christ our Brother, let us love and serve God as his children; let us honour and respect him as our Father; and as a Father, so worthy of our obedience and our respect, let us act purely through his love, purely to please him, because he is infinitely good and infinitely amiable. Although we had a thousand hearts to consecrate to him, a thousand lives to sacrifice to him, all would be infinitely short of his goodness.

*Fifthly*—It is easily deducible from the writings of the Holy Fathers, and particularly from those of St. Bernard, that there are three degrees by which we can mount to the greatest purity of intention, and, consequently, to a perfect love of God.

*First*—To seek the glory God in such a manner as to have our minds totally disentangled and disengaged from worldly things, and by placing all our content and satisfaction in God alone: seeking in all things to accomplish his holy will. Would you wish, says St. Bernard, to have some infallible sign, whereby you could know whether you have the love of God in your heart?

If you do, reflect within yourself, whether there be any thing in the world besides God that can give you joy and satisfaction, and you will thence know what progress you have made in his love. For, if my mind be capable of receiving any comfort, joy, or satisfaction from any thing else distinct from God, how can I justly say, that God engrosses, entirely, the tenderness of my heart? St. Augustin is of the same opinion, when he says, Lord, we love you less than we ought, when we love any thing else with you, which we do not love for your sake.

The second degree is, not only to forget every thing in the world, but even one's self, insomuch that we should not love ourselves but in God, and for God. For if we wish to be truly perfect, we must forget ourselves so far as never to have in view our interest and advantage in our good actions; we should be so absorbed in God, that in all the benefits we receive from his hand, either in the order of grace, or in the order of glory, the accomplishment of his will in us should give us satisfaction and joy, and not our own advantage or interest.

The little respect, humility and fervour we experience at prayer, frequently proceed from the want of this attention to the presence of God. We are not penetrated, as we ought, with this important truth, that we are in the sacred presence of God, and that he is more essentially present than we are ourselves. It is true indeed we do not see him with our carnal eyes, but it is equally true that we know, both by our reason and our faith, that he is present. In the beginning of your prayers, therefore, animate yourselves with a lively faith of the adorable presence of God. Form in your mind the highest and most august idea you possibly can of his divine and infinite majesty. Imagine yourself just going into the heavenly palace, where the King of Kings is seated on a throne, a thousand times brighter and more brilliant than the sun, and surrounded by millions of saints and angels who have all their eyes fixed on you. Prostrate yourself in mind before him, conceive the most humble sentiments of yourself, acknowledge that you are utterly unworthy to appear before him, invite all the faculties of your soul to occupy themselves about this divine object and about him alone. Say to yourself with the prophet, come my mind, my memory, my understanding and will, my heart, my soul, come and praise your great King and mighty God. After this preparation take care that your heart and tongue speak the same language. Do nothing, or think of nothing that may interrupt this attention, banish distractions so soon as they rise. For if we entertain voluntary distractions, can we be surprised if our prayers are not heard? Does it suit the Sovereign Majesty of heaven, before whom the highest powers bend,

in respectful awe, to lend a favourable ear to the prayers of such wretched pitiful creatures as we are, when we speak to him without attention and respect? "What sacrilegious insolence," cries St. Cyprian, "to expect that God will pay attention and regard to your prayers, when you pay no attention nor regard to them yourself."

The second condition is, confidence in God. We have three very strong motives to inspire us with this confidence. *First*—The great love God always bears us. *Second*—The many strong promises he has made us. *Third*—His conduct towards those souls who place confidence in him.

His love for us, according to St. Paul, is excessive: it is called in other places of scripture, a love without bounds, without measure; an eternal love. Let us consider, by one proof demonstrative in its own nature and suited to our understanding, how extraordinary this love for mankind is. He suffered his only and dearly beloved son to be put to death for our sake. If it ever happened, or ever could happen, that anywise and good king on earth would deliver over to infamy, torture and death an only son, whom he dearly and tenderly loved, in order to rescue one of his slaves from destruction, what would you think of such a king or such a love? yet the love of the Holy Trinity is still infinitely greater than such a love. And can we want any proof after this, to animate and support a great confidence in the love of God for us? "Let us not be afraid," says St. Bernard; "our loving God, has a stronger wish and desire to grant us his favours, than we have to receive them." He loves us more than we love ourselves. Tertullian says, "that God is more our father than our na-

“tural father is;” and he adds, “that if you united in one love, and joined in one breast, the love that all the fathers in the world had for their children, still the love of God for us would infinitely surpass all this.” This quality will ever engage him to grant every thing we want or require, if we apply for it with confidence.

The second motive is, the many promises he has made us. Ask and you shall receive. We may indeed sometimes doubt whether our prayers be as well said as they ought to be, but we never can, or should, doubt that they are not heard, if they are made as they ought to be. I will always have confidence in thy words, says the prophet, and nothing shall shake the firmness of this hope.

The third motive is, his conduct towards mankind. Look round all the nations of the earth, says the Holy Ghost, and know, that no one ever yet placed his confidence in the Lord who did not obtain what he prayed for. This cannot be questioned after this declaration of the Holy Ghost.

The third condition of prayer is perseverance. There are two reasons that should oblige us to persevere in prayer—the glory of God and our own interest. The glory of God obliges us, because perseverance in prayer is a great means of satisfying his justice. Our own interest obliges us also, because our perseverance is always recompensed by some particular grace. God, who is the best and most tender of Fathers, sometimes refuses to grant immediately what we ask for: sometimes too, after having granted us spiritual consolation and sensible fervor in prayer, he permits us to fall into great obscurity of mind and dryness of heart in all our prayers. Why does he treat us so?

For two reasons : first, because he desires to satisfy his justice, before he would satisfy his mercy. Secondly, he leaves us to groan a little under the weight of our miseries, and exposed to the attacks of our enemies, to the rebellion of our passions and of our senses, in order to merit grace by our perseverance, to be delivered from them all ; which grace he is resolved, at the same time, to grant us. " For God," says St. Augustine, " never delays " to grant our desires, but to exoite us still more to " desire, to expand our heart, and to render it capa- " ble of receiving his gifts with greater abundance." You have not as yet obtained what you prayed for ; do not be disheartened or discouraged ; persevere constantly to demand still ; be persuaded that it is an infallible means to obtain the effect of your prayers.

Another reason for our perseverance is, that we may hereby learn the value of the graces we receive, and preserve them afterwards with greater diligence, when we have received them. Happy would Solomon be, if he had persevered in prizing the gift of wisdom which he in early life asked and received of God.

If God therefore delays sometimes to grant immediately what we require, it is because his infinite wisdom knows that this delay, according to St. Augustine, will be more conducive to his own honour and glory and to our salvation, than a ready compliance would be.

Who can read without astonishment the conduct of our Saviour to the Cananean woman.\*

\* And Jesus went from thence and departed to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon : and entering into a house he would have no man know it ; but he could not be hid



Imitate this conduct of the Cananean; never give over or desist praying. This is the advise of St. Theresa; she says, that the temptation of relaxing, abating, ceasing, or becoming more lukewarm in our prayers, is the most dangerous temptation we can experience in this life. Though you be a great sinner, though you be very weak and imperfect, pray still, persevere to pray; and in spite of your weakness, in spite of your imperfections, in spite of your relapses, in spite of the devil and of all the powers of hell, your perseverance will save you.

Let me remark here, that we are not always to expect a sensible fervor, a pleasing unotion, and suavity in our prayers. No, christians; no saint perhaps ever arrived to perfection without meeting

for behold, a woman of Canaan, who came out of those parts, heard of him, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, crying out, said to him: Have mercy on me, O Lord! thou son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil; but he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him; saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us; and he answering said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel; for the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenesian born; but she presently came in, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him, saying: Lord help me; and she besought him to cast forth the devil ought of her daughter; but he answered and said to her: Let the children first be filled; for it is not good to take the bread of the children, and cast it to the dogs; but she answered and said to him: Yea, Lord: for the whelps also eat under the table, of the children's crumbs, that fall from the table of their masters; then Jesus answering, said to her: O woman! great is thy faith: for this saying go thy way; be it done unto thee as thou wilt; the devil is gone out of thy daughter; and her daughter was cured from that hour."—*Mat. xv. Mark v.*

in his way, with dryness, repugnance and disgusts in prayer; for examples, see the lives of St. Francis, St. Bernard, St. Theresa, &c. However, these prodigies of virtue never lost the benefit of prayer, because they persevered with courage and with an entire submission to the will of God, in all their devotions. But pious and timorous souls are too apt to say, that they would be perfectly easy under this dryness, repugnance, &c. if they knew they were not displeasing to God. I answer them, and say, that they want to know what no one ever knew, except by a special revelation from God. For the Holy Ghost informs us, that no one certainly knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred; also, that we must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Do in this case as all the saints have done: abandon yourself to the mercy of God, and possess your soul in peace; do what depends on you to do, and suffer with patience what comes from God. When you shall do, humanly speaking, what you can do, it is almost an infallible proof, that God is not displeased with you; be you then satisfied with God and the little trials he is pleased to send you.

The fourth condition is, that we should pray through Jesus Christ our Saviour himself, whose word we know is infallible; he has proposed this method to us, as an efficacious one to be heard. "If you ask any thing of my Father in my name, he will grant it to you." Now, according to the interpretation of the most pious and learned commentators, to demand in the name of Jesus Christ is to demand by the merits of his life and death, that God would grant us what our sins render us unworthy to receive.

This was the constant practice of the Church at all times. She does nothing, says nothing, but through the merits of Jesus Christ; in all her prayers, public or private, she never addresses the Eternal Father but through Jesus Christ; it is only in consideration of his merits, of his all-powerful mediation, that she hopes and asks to be heard. A conviction of the necessity of so praying, has made her likewise teach all her children never to presume to approach the throne of Divine Majesty, without being clothed by the merits of Jesus Christ; and here we must lament the gross ignorance of some christians, who rush into the sacred presence of God with their demands, as if they were worthy to be heard on account of themselves, without interposing the adorable name of Jesus, without imploring the infinite merits of our divine Saviour.

I cannot conclude this conference, without saying something about the distractions which we often experience in our prayers: very few ever applied themselves to this pious exercise, that have not sometimes experienced troubles, scruples, and uneasiness from distractions. Job, David, St. Bernard, or St. Theresa, were not free from them; but to calm piously disposed minds, let us observe.

*First*—Any person who is troubled and afflicted at the distractions that arise in prayer, after having previously and properly disposed himself to pray well, does not offend God, nor lose the merits of his prayers, nor retard his progress in perfection by such distractions. For no act is sinful that is not voluntary; now, distractions in the sense we suppose, are not voluntary; therefore, they are not sinful, when your heart has no part in these distractions; when far from pleasing you, they give

you displeasure, when, far from consenting you reject them with horror, you have nothing to fear about them : for you are then, rather an object of God's pity than of his anger : he knows our infirmities, says the Royal Prophet.

I must here make a reflection which should serve to console those souls that love God and aspire to perfection. It is this, that every thing contributes to their good ; and hence, they may derive profit, and draw good from their very faults and imperfections. For these faults, should be just motives to them, to practice humility, patience, and other virtues necessary to perfection. To apply this doctrine to the distractions we are speaking of, let us make every reasonable effort to banish them, and if we do not succeed, let us seize this occasion, as a proper one, to humble ourselves before God at the knowledge of our own weakness, and of the miseries of this life, where it is so difficult to keep the soul united to God, and duly attentive to his divine presence for any length of time.

The second advantage to be drawn from distractions is, to offer up to God, this trouble of your mind, as a victim sacrificed to his justice, and confess humbly, that your sins merit a much greater punishment, and that it is but just, that the faculties of your soul should be made instruments of this punishment.

Thirdly and lastly, let us profit by the advice and example of St. Teresa, who says, that after having done, what we could reasonably have done to banish distractions, let us then despise them, without yielding to any further uneasiness or agitation ; and be no more troubled at the wanderings

of our imagination, than we would be at the extravagant tricks or pranks of a fool. If, at any time, they happen through your fault, renounce and endeavour to banish them, and afterwards keep your mind in peace; for if we are much troubled at involuntary distractions, we ourselves co-operate with the designs the devil has on us, who usually is the cause of these distractions, in order to disgust us with the pious and necessary practice of prayer.

---

## ON MEDITATION, OR MENTAL PRAYER.

THERE are two sorts of mental prayer, one ordinary and common, the other extraordinary and sublime—The sublime prayer, or, as others call it, the passive union of the soul with God, can never be acquired by any labour, application or effort of our own. It is formed in the soul immediately and exclusively by the Holy Ghost, and is a very particular and special favour and gift of God. As this extraordinary favour is due to no one, nor promised to none, nor required of none, the few eminent saints who got it, received it gratuitously from God's pure liberality. As this sublime prayer can neither be taught nor acquired by ourselves, we shall but barely mention it, and proceed to speak of the ordinary mental prayer, which is in every one's power to obtain, by the assistance of heaven, and by co-operating faithfully with the graces we receive.

Order and method point out, that we should first speak of its necessity and its advantages, and then explain the best manner of performing it.

SS. Augustine and Hugo of St. Victor, both say, that without meditation, prayer is lukewarm, and can never be perfect, except meditation either precedes or accompanies it. A little reflection will satisfy us about the truth of this proposition; for without the practice of examining ourselves well, both as to our weakness and our misery, we shall be easily deceived about ourselves, and but badly informed of what we really want, and what we should most properly pray for; but by frequent meditation, acquainted with ourselves, and feeling our wants and our weakness, we then call for relief and assistance with all the earnestness, and all the ardour of a person, who really feels his wants, and sincerely wishes to be relieved from them. St. Bernard's words on this subject are too excellent to be omitted here: "No one, says he, becomes perfect all at once, it is by mounting not by flying, that we reach the top of the ladder. Let us then mount, and let prayer and meditation be the steps by which we mount, for meditation discovers to us what we want, and prayer obtains for us the necessary relief, meditation points out the road, and prayer conducts us safely on our journey; meditation discovers to us the dangers that surround us, and prayer makes us happily escape them all.

True devotion, which is of the utmost importance in a spiritual life, and so much sought after by those who are travelling in the road to perfection, is one, among the many advantages that flow from meditation; for devotion properly called, is nothing else, but a ready and ardent disposition of the will to do good. Devotion has two causes, the principal and the extrinsic cause is God, the internal one

is meditation. Meditation then, next to the grace of God, is what chiefly contributes to inflame the heart and to produce in us, that ready disposition to practice all christian virtues, and every thing that nourishes piety.

After speaking, as we proposed, about the necessity and advantages of meditation, we come now to explain the method of performing it.

*First*.—Choose the subject on which you would wish to meditate; and then employ on it, the three faculties of your soul, your memory, your understanding and your will; your memory in order to represent to you the point or mystery on which you are about to meditate; your understanding to examine carefully, and to consider maturely, all its particulars, and every thing relative to it, or connected with it, that can or may inflame your will. For, as this meditation of the understanding, is the source from which flow all the acts, that we produce in our prayers, and as we produce none then, which are not a necessary consequence of this meditation, we should employ all our attention to perform it well.

*Lastly*.—You should employ your will to produce the acts that depend on the will. This last point is the most important, and the most essential of all, as it is the end we seek for in meditation. For all the benefit we can or ought to derive from meditation consists, in inflaming the will to pursue good and to fly evil: however, to prevent this emotion of the will from being a fugitive impression, it is often necessary and always useful, that it should be founded on reason, for man being a reasonable animal he wishes to be conducted by

reason; hence, the utility of convincing his understanding, before you can inflame his will.

To reap therefore from meditation, all the advantages it produces, we should meditate not in a languid, indifferent, hasty or superficial manner, but with all the fervor, all the attention, the soul is capable of. We should examine all things in detail, consider them maturely, weigh them attentively and investigate them carefully. For why do not sinners either feel or fear the wretchedness of their situation, or the horrors of death, or the severity of God's judgment, or the tremendous effects of his vengeance? It is, either because they never meditate on these things at all, or if they meditate on them, they do it in a vague, careless, languid and indifferent manner. For the bitterest pills, if swallowed at once and by wholesale, excite no sensation of bitterness, so in like manner, the most important truths of our holy religion, makes little or no impression, if they be not duly considered by meditation. Why do not the humiliations of the son of God, the insults he received, the injuries he suffered, the death he endured for mankind, all ways make a strong impression on the piously disposed christians? Because they consider these things superficially, and never penetrate them as they ought, by a long and solid meditation. Let us bruise these truths like pepper between our teeth, and they shall soon warm our mouths and force tears from our eyes. It has been already remarked; that the chief end of all meditation is, to inflame the will, and to produce in it affectionate sentiments and holy resolutions. We should suffer therefore our understanding to dwell no longer on



the subject, after the will is once inflamed. As soon as this happens, when we find our will affected with any tender or pious sentiment, for instance, with sorrow for our sins, with contempt for the world, with love for God, with a desire of conforming in all things to his divine will, or of suffering for his sake, or any other good emotion, let us immediately interrupt our meditation and suffer our will to dwell on these affectionate sentiments, until our soul be entirely penetrated with them; for this emotion, these resolutions, are the end sought for, in and by meditation; therefore, when we obtain the end, we drop the means. Hence, it follows by an easy consequence, that when we have not a facility of reasoning much, or cannot find matter in our minds to extend our meditation to any length, we should not make ourselves uneasy on that account. For it is a constant maxim in a spiritual life, that the best disposition to advance therein, and the most advantageous to all conditions is, that in which God opens the source of our affections and the sentiments of our heart, without any great assistance from the understanding. If God then be so favourable to you, as by means of some simple reflections, or some short considerations to inflame your will with his love, or with a desire of humbling yourself, and of leading a crucified life for his sake; and if your mind and heart dwell long on these thoughts, be persuaded of it, for it is a certain truth, that this manner of prayer is better for you, and more advantageous to your soul than if your mind had been occupied with long reflections and sublime reasonings. For you hereby arrive at once, to what is most perfect, and most essential in prayer, and

what ought to be the end, effect and benefit of prayer.

Here, I must caution you against an error that ignorance may lead some persons into. Prayer or meditation is not the end we propose to ourselves in a spiritual life, it is only the means of advancing or making a progress in it. For what does our perfection consist in? In an abnegation or contempt of ourselves, self-denial, a perfect mortification of our senses, a complete victory over our passions, an eradication of our evil habits and vices; but above all, in the love of God, and a recovery of the state of original justice which we lost by sin; hence, our prayers ought to be practical, and ought all tend to the regulation of our life, and to the removing of all the obstacles that oppose our progress in the road of perfection. Our meditations should likewise be directed to the same end. When we know well what virtues we should desire to obtain, what faults and imperfections we would wish to avoid, let us choose either of these, as the subject of our meditation, and when our will is once inflamed, let us make many and repeated acts of this or that virtue, and thereby if possible, acquire a habit of these virtues. For a habit of any virtue is only acquired by frequent and repeated acts. Some may say, and perhaps think too, that they are incapable of making meditations in the manner before mentioned: they have not they say, a sufficient fund of knowledge or of facts in their minds, to discuss or enlarge upon, in order to meditate properly. To these I answer, that there are but few, if there be even one, piously disposed soul, either so grossly ignorant, or so totally incapable of reflection, but

can consider in a plain and simple manner, whether he has acquitted himself properly of the duties of his state, and how he should behave in order to do so; whether he regulates his family as a good man, and what he should do in order to regulate it thus; whether he bears patiently the evils annexed to his condition, or inseparable from his employment. Let all such persons reflect on these, and they shall find sufficient things to meditate on, sufficient things to lament, and sufficient things to reform. Let them afterwards form their resolutions, and then rest satisfied, that this form of meditation is an excellent and useful one. St. Augustin and St. Francis passed whole days in this kind of prayer. The one saying, O Lord grant me grace to know thee and to know myself. The other in repeating, O Lord, who am I and who art thou! See their lives, &c. See the anecdote of brother Giles and St. Bonaventure on the love of God. See St. Bonaventure's life.

I cannot conclude without making one remark which may be necessary to some of us. It is this, that every one who wishes to advance to perfection by prayer, should use his best endeavours to mortify his senses, to purify his heart, and to have a fixed determination never to consent to a deliberate or wilful sin. These should be the foundations of all our prayers, and we should often strengthen them by repeated acts of the will. For every one should know what necessity we are under of fortifying ourselves continually against the weakness of our heart and the instability of our nature.

**SOME METHODS OF MEDITATING.**

Prepare yourself for meditation by sincere endeavours to avoid every sin, and to acquire purity of heart, possessed of interior and exterior recollection; seek by meditation only the greater glory of God and your own sanctification.

Prepare the subject of your meditation by reading it over carefully before you go to bed, and reviewing it once in the morning. Then on the first point—

Recollect as well as you can, what were our Saviour's sentiments, words, and actions, relative to the subject of your meditation. Love them, praise them, and let your heart be dilated with gratitude, joy, admiration, respect, according to the nature of your subject.

In the second point, consider the subject of your meditation, relative to yourself; examine every thing in it, that you should avoid, or should do for your sanctification; convince your will by the strongest reasons you can think of, that you are every way bound to shun the vice, or acquire the virtue you meditate on. When this is well done, the will is powerfully stimulated to act efficaciously, as the understanding directs. Then compare your conduct with your obligations, and seriously reflect, whether you have complied with them or not. As this investigation will certainly discover to you several faults and imperfections, you should humble yourself, make acts of contrition for your past faults, and acts of confusion for the present state; conceive a strong desire of doing better for the future,

and produce affections suitable to your subject ; afterwards have recourse to God, and pray to him in the most earnest manner, that he would grant you the necessary graces for acting better for the future.

In the third point, in order to co-operate with the graces you have petitioned for, you must form strong resolutions, conformable to the subject of your meditation. These resolutions should not be in general terms only ; they must be particular and adapted to the present occasion ; they must be efficacious, and strongly prompting to surmount every obstacle in the way of our salvation, and to use every method conducive to so desirable an end. Finally, they must be accompanied with a diffidence, in ourselves, and a confidence in God, conclude with thanking God for the graces you may have received in meditation, and by begging pardon for the faults you may have committed in it, and by begging further, that he would bless all your good resolutions that day and for ever. Carefully endeavour afterwards during the course of the day to preserve in your mind, the good sentiments you had in your meditation, and do not lose them by applying too suddenly and too eagerly to your employment or duty.

#### SECOND METHOD OF MEDITATION.

Invoke on your knees the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and make an act of contrition, acknowledge and adore the presence of God.

Read over slowly and carefully some well chosen book of piety or meditation. At frequent intervals pause a little, and reflect in the best manner you can, on what you have read, dwell

as long as you can, on any thought that affects you, softens your heart, or moves you to tender piety or good resolutions. Look on a crucifix or turn up your eyes now and then to heaven, praying at the same time to God to touch your heart and move your affections. When you perceive yourself distracted resume your book, and continue to go on thus during the time prescribed for your meditation.

### THIRD METHOD, VERY PLAIN.

Repeat on your knees with all possible attention some vocal prayer which you have committed to memory: pause a little now and then, and reflect some few moments on what you are saying. If you are moved or affected in any part of it, dwell there and make acts corresponding to the affections you have received. This method of prayer, which is partly vocal, partly mental, disposes admirably to say vocal prayers well, and prepares insensibly to the most sublime and most perfect method of praying, as St. Teresa experienced.

### FOURTH EASY METHOD.

Prepare yourself as before directed, then with all the attention in your power, make an act of love, or an act of contrition, or an act of confidence in God, or an offering of yourself entirely to his providence; say some short and fervent prayers in the most affectionate and moving manner you can: for instance, the following or similar prayers: Oh! my Saviour, when shall I love you with my whole heart! My Saviour, I abandon myself en-

tirely to your direction ! My God ! I hope you will have mercy on me. My God, who has created me have pity on me. Repeat these from your heart, affectionately, sincerely, tenderly and movingly during a quarter of an hour. You will be sometimes tepid, but persevere and you will frequently experience the contrary.

---

### ON MEDITATION.

“ Unless thy law had been my meditation, I had then perhaps perished in my abjection.”—Ps. 118.

These words of the royal prophet, and his own example, clearly evince the necessity of meditation to all mankind. It is their great support in all the dangers and afflictions, which mortality is liable to here below. It is an easy, and never-failing source of sanctification, which the mercy of God has pointed out to all Christians. A neglect, therefore, of meditation, is culpable in all Christians who desire to be saved ; but is, incontestibly, much more so in priests, who want it more than the rest of mankind. For what a holy father confidently asserted of the bulk of Christians, “ that it is simply impossible for any man to lead a virtuous or pious life, without the help of prayer and meditation,” must be more emphatically true, when applied to clergymen. Your attention is requested, to the proofs adduced, for these two points—First, meditation is necessary to all : secondly, meditation is more necessary to ecclesiastics than to others.

Few have ever presumed to question the neces-

sity of prayer in general. The texts of Scripture, on this point, are so clear, so formally expressive of this truth, that they leave no room for cavil or evasion. The words of our Saviour, In St. Luke 18- "That we ought always to pray and not to faint." And in St. Matthew 26, "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." And in St. James 4, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss. These are evident demonstrations of the necessity of prayer. St. John Chrysostom informs us what kind of prayer this should be, which is so strongly and so frequently inculcated by our Saviour and his Apostles. According to this holy father, our prayers, to be efficacious, must be lively, must be vehement, and must be long continued; and it is a truth, acknowledged by all, because it is, every day, confirmed by fatal experience, that our prayers are rarely fervent, lively or vehement, except preceded or accompanied by meditation. For can any man cry out in a lively and vehement manner with the prophet. Lord save me and from all evil deliver me. Unless by frequent and deep reflection on the great truths of the Christian religion, he intimately feels, and is entirely convinced of the corruption of our nature, the darkness of our understanding, the weakness of our will, our infirmity, inconstancy and instability in our best resolutions and purposes? Let our speculative knowledge of these and other great truths, be as eminent as you please, they shall make no lasting impression on us, without frequent and serious meditation. To have a practical knowledge of them, and to frame our lives according



to this practical knowledge, we should closely examine, maturely weigh and seriously consider such important subjects; for, without this, we are, as Saint James says, like a man who, having viewed himself in a glass, went his way, and presently forgot what manner of man he was. This forgetfulness is founded on our corrupt nature; as the book of Wisdom says, chap. 4, v. 12, For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind. From all this, I conclude with the Apostle, that a man, who does not strengthen himself daily by meditation, may speculatively know what is good, and also communicate this knowledge to others, but he will ever be buried in a real darkness of the understanding, and a practical ignorance of truth; he shall be always learning, but never arrive to the knowledge of truth; he shall see and approve of what is good, but will never practice it; he shall have the letter that kills, but will want the spirit that vivifies. In a word, according to Saint Bonaventure, he shall have the honeycomb, but will want the honey which makes it precious.

The necessity of meditation is either plainly taught, or easily inferred from many other parts of Scripture. We read in Ecc. 3. v. 22, Always meditate on what God commands. These words contain a positive precept of thinking always on the commands of the Lord. And this, certainly, cannot be effected without meditation.

Jeremias, c. 12, v. 11.—With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is none that

considereth in the heart. The sins, miseries and afflictions of mankind are here attributed to the want of meditation.

Isaias 46, c. v. 8.—Return ye transgressors to the heart. The prophet points out meditation here, as the only road that leads to repentance. If we compare the texts of these two prophets together, we can easily comprehend a bold and peremptory assertion of St. Teresa, which, at first sight, may appear extraordinary. *She says, that it is morally impossible for any Catholic, who meditates daily, to be damned.* She must mean hereby, according to the prophets just mentioned, that meditation will either prevent our sinning mortally, or will make us repent sincerely, if we are so unfortunate as to have fallen into sin. The pious and celebrated Gerson, long before St. Teresa's time had said, that without a special miracle of God, no one who did not daily meditate, could arrive to the perfection of Christianity. Every one acquainted with the duties and obligations of Christianity, will readily subscribe to the declaration of this celebrated man.—For no man can presume to know God with that true, that practical knowledge, which prompts to love and to serve him, as he ought to be loved and served, without meditating frequently on him. No man will ever know himself, his vicious inclinations, his misery, his weakness, his corruption, without profoundly meditating on himself. No one will know the obligations of his state, without reflecting seriously and deeply on them, and without animating himself by these serious reflections, to fulfill all his obligations. And as we must all allow, that a practical knowledge of

God, of ourselves, and of the obligations of our state, are necessary to salvation, so we should allow, by a just and necessary consequence, that frequent meditation, on these subjects, is necessary to salvation, because they cannot be sufficiently understood without meditation.

Secondly. Meditation being so necessary to Christians in general, must be still more necessary to Clergymen. The state of perfection which Clergymen have embraced, and the succour derived from prayer and meditation to acquire this perfection; the faithful discharge of the duties of their profession, which they can never operate, without being men of prayer; and lastly, the precepts and examples of all the saints and pious clergymen that ever lived in the Catholic Church, will place this truth before us with all the evidence necessary to a moral demonstration.

*First*—The sanctity of their state. The sanctity or perfection of their state does not consist in the possession or practice of any one single virtue. No: it consists in the possession and practice of all the great and sublime virtues of Christianity. A priest is bound by his state to possess a salutary fear of God's judgments; a lively faith; a firm hope, an ardent charity; an universal and constant mortification of his senses, will and passions; a disengagement of heart from all creatures; and a great zeal for God's honour and glory. Now these are virtues that never are retained long without a constant practice of meditation. For a salutary fear of God's judgments and his terrible punishments; a horror of sin and of all its fatal effects and consequences, are seldom produced, and never nourished in us, without frequent meditation on

these dreadful truths ; faith languishes without frequent reflections on the great maxims of the Christian religion ; hope is weakened without frequent contemplation on the happiness promised to persevering fidelity, and the fire of charity is soon extinguished, if not fanned by the breath of constant meditation. A disengagement of heart from all creatures must be acquired by solid reflections on the nothingness of all earthly goods, on the folly of all human things, and on the instability of all human happiness. It must have been from an entire conviction of the justice of this reasoning, that the famous Cardinal Cajetan did not scruple to declare, in the most positive manner, that “no clergyman, either secular or regular, could ever arrive to the perfection required in his state, who did not apply some time every day to serious meditation.

*Secondly*—The great succour a priest derives from meditation, whereby he is enabled to discharge, faithfully, all his functions, should be a strong encouragement to him, to apply himself carefully to this practice. The great effects produced by meditation, clearly evince this assertion. These effects are the enlightening of the understanding, the inflaming of the will, and detachment from all creatures, in order to attach us to God alone. No practice of piety, says the pious and zealous Boudon, can be more satisfactory or more consoling, than meditation. It dissipates the darkness that surrounds us ; it opens our eyes to see clearly the great truths of religion ; it unlocks all the treasures of God’s graces. We should not be surprised, that such extraordinary effects flow from meditation, when we consider, that while we medi-

tate, we are studying in the school of God ; and what wonder is there, says St. Leo, that under such a master we should make a good progress?—When we approach near this inexhaustible source of light, we often receive some lights and knowledge, which all the reading and study in the world could never procure us.

And it not only enlightens our understanding, but inflames our wills, and renders them all docility to the impressions of grace. It emancipates us from the slavery of our passions and senses, and furnishes us with approved remedies, and sure preservatives against all temptations, according to St. Isidore of Seville. In detaching us from the world, it attaches us to God by a tender and solid devotion ; it unites us to him by sentiments of love, praise, adoration and thanksgiving.—For these, according to St. Thomas, are the happy effects of meditation and contemplation.

Let us now, with St. Bonaventure, contrast to this man of prayer, the ecclesiastic, who has no taste, no desire, no disposition to meditation or contemplation. What is he? A priest in effigy, and not a priest in reality. A being who usurps the power, the functions, and the dress of a priest, but who is filled, internally, with all the affections and passions of a gross and carnal worldling. Of such a priest may be fitly said, the words formerly addressed to the angel of Sardis, “ He is poor, and blind, and naked, and miserable, and slowly and heavily dragging on, in a living carcass, the languishing remains of a miserable life.

Every one here undoubtedly knows how earnestly St. Francis of Sales recommends daily meditation to the Laity. But, perhaps his sentiments

on the same subject, with regard to the clergy, are not so universally known. He says, "that it is a matter, not only of importance, but of extreme importance, that all ecclesiastics should apply themselves carefully and daily to mental prayer; that this was a thing not only of obligation, but of an indispensable obligation. Hence, he wishes, that every clergyman should lay down for himself a fixed rule, and impose on himself a strict law of meditating some time every day; and that he should never break this rule, or violate this law, without some inevitable necessity; for fear, says the Saint, lest by an insensible relaxation, he should gradually abandon a practice, which is the very soul of his sacred ministry, and without which, he can never discharge his principal obligations with regard to God. himself or his flock."

Priests are bound by their station and office to be mediators between God and man, to pray for all the faithful, to appease the wrath of heaven, and to solicit the conversion of sinners. According to St. Bonaventure. They are no less bound to excite their flock to virtue, to reclaim them from vice, to instruct them in their respective duties, to inspire them with a love of prayer, and to teach them the best and most useful method of praying. For, as Benediot 14th, and the pious father, Lewis of Granada say, "prayer and meditation being so necessary to the salvation of all, it would be doing the laity an irreparable injury to suffer them to be ignorant of, or not to instruct them in, so important and so essential a business. But how can a

Priest, who is not a man of prayer, discharge these obligations?

What favours can he obtain from heaven for others, who can procure no favours for himself? How can he instruct others in a method of prayer, which he either neglects, or is ignorant of himself?

St. Charles Borromeo was so convinced of the absolute necessity of meditation to Priests, that in his 5th council, he lays it down as an indispensable rule, that every candidate for holy orders, should accurately know, and exactly practice daily meditation. And what this great Saint took such pains to recommend to priests, he ever practised most constantly himself.

And it is not only a St. Charles, or a St. Francis of Sales, or a few other Saints that practised meditation themselves, and recommended so strongly to others:—No, most certainly. For every Saint, every Apostolic man, every pious Clergyman that either preceded or followed them, made it a maxim in their conduct, never to be severed from that repose of meditation which should succeed the labours of action. In several of their works, they insist in the strongest terms on the necessity of meditation. They declare, that meditation is the mother of sanctity, an unerring guide to conduct us in the road of salvation, an invincible rampart, which temptations may assail, but can never conquer a tower of defence, which no attack of the devil can destroy. They assert, most peremptorily, that without meditation any man must soon fall from the path of virtue into a fatal languor, and soon die away. From all these reasons and authorities, we can safely conclude with the pious Father John of Avila, “that any man

“ who feels no desire, no inclination, no disposition for meditation, or who is not efficaciously resolved to conquer every repugnance he may have to so pious a practice, should never receive holy orders;”—And secondly, “ That if a man be already irrevocably engaged in holy orders, there is every reason in the world to tremble for his salvation, if he do not punctually and faithfully spend some time every day in meditation.”

Prayer, according to Benedict 14th, is a mystical ladder, by which a soul raises itself from earth to heaven; it is a search after celestial things; it is a desire of invisible happiness; it is a conversation with God, and an union with the Holy Ghost.

According to these maxims, therefore, meditation or mental prayer, is, an elevation and application of our mind and heart to God, in order to fulfil our duties to him, to expose our wants to him. to beg graces of him, to learn his holy will in every thing, to reflect on his adorable perfections, and on every thing that contributes to our salvation. Or meditation may be defined otherwise, thus:—It is a holy practice by which we are employed in considering some mystery of faith, some truth of religion, some virtue, some vice, some maxim of the gospel, or some other edifying subject:—And then endeavouring to produce thereby, some pious affections, and to make general and particular resolutions to regulate our life, conformably to the reflections we have made, and to the resolutions we have taken.

Meditation is composed of three parts, the preparation, the body or substance of meditation, and the conclusion.

We are informed by the Holy Ghost how neces-



sary due preparation is for all prayer, especially for meditation. And we are further told, that to present ourselves to prayer, without this precaution, would be really tempting God.

This preparation is of two kinds, remote preparation and immediate preparation. Remote preparation consists in great interior recollection, and in a great disengagement of heart, from the cares and embarrassments of worldly business. For if our hearts or minds be much clogged or occupied with the world, its cares, its concerns, its passions or its perplexities, we can never apply ourselves to meditation without great dissipation and distraction. Besides these just now mentioned remote preparation requires also purity of intention, purity of conscience, a mortification of the passions, and a great hatred to the smallest sins or the occasions of them.

Without these dispositions, or sincere endeavours to acquire them, we never will succeed much in meditation; but with them we shall infallibly draw down on ourselves from heaven all the graces and light we stand in need of. We are told by the royal prophet, that if we see sin in our hearts, God will not hearken to our prayers. And the Apostle St. James desires, that all who wish to approach to God by prayer, should endeavour to approach him with pure hands and with pure hearts; and then God will approach to them.

*Secondly.*—Remote preparation requires likewise that we should choose properly the subjects of our meditation. The proper subjects of our meditation are those which suit best with our wants, our dispositions and the state of our souls. As these are different in different persons, our own

experience, and the instructions of our confessors must direct us, to what subjects we should attach ourselves mostly. After trying the following, viz. :—Death, judgment, hell and heaven, the adorable perfections of God, his omnipotence, his goodness, his providence, his justice, his mercy; the mysteries of the life and passion of our Saviour, the virtues we wish to practice, and the vices we wish to shun; and then explaining to our confessor how and in what we succeed, and which of these subjects we most desire to meditate on, he will point out to us then the most proper subjects for our meditation.

*Thirdly.*—After choosing our subject, we must then prepare it, digest it, and arrange it properly. This is done by reading it attentively over night, or hearing it read by another; and in the morning, by ruminating on it a little before we kneel down, or by reading it over once more. We should likewise have prepared in our mind the different acts we should make in the different points of the meditation; the affections we wish to excite, and the resolutions we wish to make.

It may be asserted with sufficient confidence, that it is the want of these, or some of these preparations, that mankind in general do not succeed in meditation, as they wish, or as they ought. They go to meditation, without proper dispositions, without sufficient recollection, without a subject sufficiently arranged, or with a mind too much engaged with worldly concerns. Hence proceed, that dissipation of thought, that croud of distractions, which rapidly succeed each other, during the time of meditation. And the imagination shoots

off in the wildest excursions for want of proper points to fix and restrain it within due bounds.

The immediate preparation likewise requires three things.

*First.*—We must place ourselves in the presence of God by an act faith. We must firmly believe that God is every where, that he is in the very place we are now in, that he is more intimately present to us, and in us, than we are to ourselves. A lively representation of the divine majesty present within us, and attention to the manner we behave in meditation, will be a strong reflection to solicit the proper attention and to excite the due respect, which should accompany so pious an action. And in order to fix our imagination still better, it would be an useful method to consider God sometimes as a great light surrounding us on all sides, enlightning our understanding and inflaming our hearts. And sometimes as a God of mercy, who admits us by a special favour in his presence, there to expose to him our wants, our weakness and our miseries, sometimes as a tender father, who condescends to converse familiarly and affectionately with his children. And sometimes as a sovereign judge who will require from us a rigorous account of the very action we are engaged in. And sometimes as a God of infinite majesty, seated with splendour on his heavenly throne, and encompassed all around with millions of angels and saints, who are all filled with the most awful respect, and the most profound veneration in his presence.

*Secondly.*—After placing ourselves in the presence of God, in one or other of these manners. We should acknowledge ourselves unworthy to ap-

pear before him, from the heinousness of our sins ; then make an act of contrition for them. We should likewise acknowledge that of ourselves, and without grace we are incapable of having the least good thought that would contribute to our salvation. We should humbly implore this grace, invoke the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the prayers of the Virgin Mother of God, of our patron saints, and of our guardian angels.

*Thirdly.*—We should endeavour to represent to ourselves the subject of our meditation, in as lively a manner as we can, in order to fix our imagination and the powers of our soul. If the subject of our meditation be a spiritual one, viz. : some moral truth or virtue, we should make use of the memory and understanding, in order to represent them to us ; and to consider their greatness, their excellence, their importance, their necessity, their utility, their consequences, &c. If we meditate before the blessed sacrament, we may place ourselves at the feet of our Saviour, after the example of his disciples, and St. Mary Magdalen.—We should receive the holy truths which we are filled with in meditation, as if he spoke them to us with his holy mouth. And we should persuade ourselves, that it is he himself who instructs us in meditation, and acts there to us the charitable parts of master, pastor, guide, conductor and sanctifier.

If the subject of our meditation be a sensible one, we must then make use of the imagination, as well as the memory and understanding. Few examples will illustrate this. When we meditate on the last judgment, we should make use of our imagination to represent to us in the most lively manner possible,

all the striking circumstances of it, and the judge of the living and the dead coming with all the appearance of terror, pomp and power to decide and pronounce man's eternal doom. When we meditate on hell, we should descend in imagination to these darksome caverns, to these frightful gulphs, where the damned are to suffer for eternity, the dreadful punishments inflicted on them for their guilty deeds. If we meditate on the passion of our Saviour, we should represent him to our imagination, either prostrate on the ground in the garden of Olives, bathed all in blood and agonising in all the pains he suffered there, betrayed, by Judas and abandoned by all his disciples. Let us then follow him in spirit, to the different tribunals to which he is cruelly dragged; to the house of Caiphas, where he is insulted and struck on the face; to Herod's, where he is mocked and treated like a fool; to Pilate's, where he is slandered and falsely accused; to the Prætorium, where, with a cruelty almost incredible, he is dreadfully scourged and crowned with thorns; to Calvary, where he sheds the last drop of his blood for us; to the cross, where he expires and consummates his sacrifice, exposed to all the malignity, and to all the maledictions of mankind, and to all the rigours of the divine justice.

*Secondly.*—The body, or substance of the meditation consists, in endeavouring to penetrate ourselves deeply with the mystery we meditate on, or to convince ourselves thoroughly with the truth we reflect on. We make then the application of these truths to ourselves in particular, in order to excite pious affections in the soul, and strong resolutions in the will, to amend our lives and to

reform our conduct. Hence. this part of the meditation contains four points, viz :—The consideration of one or more truths, the application of them to ourselves, the pious affections which result from them, and the resolutions formed by the will, to regulate our conduct afterwards.

And *First*.—The consideration is an operation of the mind, by which we endeavour to penetrate deeply into the subject of our meditation. 'Tis in him that meditates, a serious attention to some mystery, or to some truth, in order to know well its nature, its properties, its circumstances, its consequences : it draws from this mystery, or this truth, all the consequences that can naturally flow from either ; it considers its subject in every point of view, by which it can make any impression on the soul. To succeed sometimes in consideration, no more is necessary than to pass over in our minds, what we have read, or what we have prepared for our subject, without reasoning any length of time. And we can say in general, that it is not the best, nor the most useful way, to make, on every subject, all the reflections that could be made on it ; for this would take up all the time destined for meditation, which time should be employed in more essential purposes. Let us confine ourselves, therefore, to some few truths, more convincing, and more affecting than the rest, and when we feel any extraordinary unction, let us make an act of faith on that point, and beg of God the grace to practice it here, that we should not be condemned for it hereafter.

*Secondly*.—An application to ourselves : that is, we should apply to ourselves, to our conduct, and to our life, the truths we meditate on. We

should ask ourselves, do we comprehend well the mystery we meditate on? Are we entirely convinced of the truth of it? How do we practise the virtue we are thinking on? And, are we guilty of the contrary vice? Let us then humble ourselves at the view of what we are, and at the great difference there is between what we are and what we ought to be. Without this particular of applying meditation to ourselves, our meditations may be full of fine reflections, but will have very little practical utility.

*Thirdly.*—From these reflections thus made, several affections are excited naturally in the will, always differing, according to the different subjects we meditate on. By these pious affections are meant, such pious motions in the heart, as impels us efficaciously to avoid evil and to do good: for instance, motions of terror, aversion or horror, when our subjects are terrible or fatal; and sentiments of esteem, desire, hope, love, joy, when our subjects are lovely, agreeable or advantageous. An example will explain this. If we meditate on the horrors of mortal sin, we are filled with confusion for having abandoned ourselves to it, we are penetrated with a lively grief, for having been a slave to it, and feel a great fear of falling into it again. Impressed strongly with these sentiments, we produce different acts; we admire the goodness of God, who patiently waited so long for our repentance, though he could hurl us justly into hell, immediately after the commission of the first fault. We conceive great confidence in his mercy, that he will pardon our past faults, and preserve us from future relapses.

From this example it is obvious, that the acts

we make in this part of meditation will be different according to the different subjects we are upon. There is one remark of importance to be made here and which should never be neglected in meditation, which is, that whenever we feel any pious affections in the will, we should always stop reasoning, indulge these emotions, let them penetrate deeply into our hearts, there to be digested and to nourish the soul. When these affections are exhausted, we should calmly endeavour to substitute new ones in their place, or return to the first affections, if we find more relish in them, than in any others. This would be following the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, who is the only sure and infallible master of prayer. In producing the affections, says, Saint Francis of Sales, let us imitate the industrious bee, that ever sticks to the same flower, while she finds any thing in it fit for her purpose; but flies off to another, so soon as she has extracted from the first all the particles it contained fit or useful for making honey.

When our understanding is well convinced by the reflections we have made, and our heart inflamed by the pious affections excited there, it will be easy then to form good resolutions, and execute afterwards all we have discovered in prayer, that God requires of us. For by good resolutions we understand a firm determination to avoid every thing that is hurtful, and to pursue every thing that is useful to salvation. 'Tis from these resolutions that the advantages of meditation are to be principally derived. To make these resolutions truly useful, we should observe the following regulations.



*First.*—We should never make too many at once, for that would be a sure way to execute none of them. One or two at most will be sufficient, provided we are faithful enough to practise them.

*Secondly.*—Our resolutions should never be too vague or too general. For instance : I will never commit a sin again ; I am resolved to love God with all my heart and soul. Such resolutions seldom or never produce any lasting benefit. To render them efficacious, they must be very particular ; pointed exactly against our defects, our wants, our predominant or favourite passion. We must, even in all resolutions that require it, specify the circumstances of time, places and persons. We must foresee as well as we can, the occasions and obstacles that might impede the execution of our promises, and resolve against them likewise. The following resolutions may serve as an example of what we mean. I renounce such a sin (in particular) for ever again ; such person or persons have been the occasion of them ; such a house, such a company chiefly caused it ; therefore I will never frequent such a house, such a company, or such a person again ; and if any accident, surprise or necessity should bring me there again, I will retire immediately, or at least as soon as I conveniently can ; and while I stay, I will take every precaution possible not to sin. And in case I fail in these my resolutions, I impose on myself such a penance for each failure.

During the course of the day we should recall to our memory now and then, the resolutions we have made in the morning, in order to strengthen fidelity to practise them. Secondly, we should repeat the

same resolution ever till we execute it faithfully at last. We should sometimes write down our resolutions, especially in time of retreat: 'tis useful to read them over afterwards.

The conclusion of our meditation consists of four acts.

The *First* is, to thank God humbly for all the good thoughts we have had, and all the graces we have received in meditation.

The *Second* is, to ask pardon for all the faults and neglects we have been guilty of in meditation.

The *Third* is, to offer the resolutions we have made to our Saviour, and to beg his blessing on them.

The *Fourth* and last is, to beg of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, our patron Saints, and guardian Angel, that he would grant us the necessary graces to execute our resolutions with fidelity.

After meditation, we should take care during the day to preserve carefully the sentiments we were inspired with, in meditation, and not suffer them to evaporate immediately, by applying ourselves, too quickly, too eagerly, or too earnestly to the business of our station.

---

## ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

*Why should we love God?*

Because he is God; and because nothing is more just in itself, and more advantageous to us. God is a being infinitely perfect, our most munifi-

benefactor, and our sovereign master, and consequently, all our obedience is due to him. Love is the effect of esteem. We seldom love what we despise, or a thing whose merit is unknown to us. It is plain that nothing can merit esteem so much as God, because he is a being that contains, in himself, all possible perfection. A being that is all goodness merits love, supreme love.—God is such a being; therefore he merits all our love. But some may say, we do not see this being so great in himself. No, says Saint Bernard, but we see his amiable works. “The heavens, the earth, with all things therein, all declare how lovely their Creator is.” Why do we not feel this sensible love for God? Because we have too great a love for the limited and perishable perfections of creatures. Because we occupy ourselves too little about God and his greatness; because we do not often make him the subject of our serious reflections; because the spirit of the world dissipates our minds, and keeps us out of that solitude where God would speak to our hearts. It must be owned, that a greatness, unproductive and barren with respect to us, that confers on us no kindness, no favours, no benefits, does not inspire us always with a sensible love. Man, too much accustomed to love himself, in all that he loves, is more affected, by the benefits he receives, than by the perfections he admires. He piques himself on his gratitude, and, if he loves what deserves to be loved without being first loved by that object, he loves it still more when he experiences from it the effects of a friendly and generous love. On this principle, to what being could we possibly owe so much gratitude, as

to God? For, how much and how far did he love us? Even so far as to bestow himself on us. And when? When we were most unworthy of his favours. All powerful as he is, he could give us nothing greater than himself. Therefore, we should love him, because he hath first loved us. Who loved us? God. And whom did he love? Weak miserable creatures, dust and ashes. And how much? Even to lay down his life for us. Saint Bernard reasons thus on this subject:—Suppose a king had raised me from the lowest and meanest rank in society, and not in want either of myself or my services, without receiving from me any proof of fidelity, attachment or respect. On the contrary, if I had always behaved to him with contempt, ingratitude, and insult. If this king, to rescue me from a punishment of death, which I had justly deserved, delivered over in my stead to the most cruel torments, an only son, whom he tenderly loved, and if he required no other return from me for this excessive kindness, but to give him my heart and to love him; would I not be the greatest monster in the world if I did not love him?

Nothing is more advantageous to us than to love God. We are well recompensed for loving God. Though pure love is not mercenary or selfish, it does not seek a reward; yet it merits it, and surely gets it. It is proposed as an encouragement to him that does not love as yet; but is due to him who perseveres in the divine love in which alone our real happiness consists. Consider a moment the people of the world who are generally reputed happy. The great and the rich—are they happy? No, indeed. Let them possess what they will, they

still aspire to more dignity, more riches, more honour. The true and essential reason of their insatiability is, that no created thing, being their last end, can gratify their desires. If, instead of their restless busy movements, if, instead of so many useless projects and desires which waste their strength, they turned to God, and sought their happiness in him, the royal prophet, and all the saints, with one voice, assure us, that they would find in him, and in him alone, the happiness they in vain seek elsewhere.

*By what means is this love to be acquired?*

By the mortification and sacrifice of all our inordinate and irregular passions, which are the greatest obstacles to it. By the practice of all the christian virtues, which are the surest means to obtain it, and by the observance of all the commandments which are the surest marks and most solid effects of it.

*How ought we to love God?*

To answer this question we must distinguish this love into its various kinds. First, a pure love. Second, an interested love. Third, a love of complaisance. Fourth, a love of benevolence. Fifth, an affecting or affectionate love. Sixth, an effective or active love. It is certain that the infinite perfections of God have inspired some souls with so great, so noble an idea of this sovereignly perfect being, that they have abandoned themselves sometimes to the most lively and most tender sentiments of the purest love, as may be seen in the lives and writings of Saint Bernard, Saint Augustin, Saint Teresa, Saint Francis de Sales, &c; consequently, such an act is possible. But an habitual state of such a love, a state in which we always love God thus in this life, without any regard to our spiritual

and eternal interest is not possible ; this has been condemned in the quietists. To love God purely for his own sake is certainly the most perfect manner of loving him ; and to this manner of loving him, our best endeavours should tend. To love him only for our own sake, and in such a manner, that we would cease to love him if we did not expect a reward for so loving him, would be a mere servile love ; this would be only loving ourselves. To love him both for his sake, and for our own sake, as the principal, the source, the object, and the end of our eternal happiness, this manner of loving God is, doubtless, both laudable in itself, and agreeable to him. God himself proposed to Abraham this motive :—" I am your very great reward."

Our Saviour proposed the same to his apostles—" Your reward is very great in heaven." Saint Paul often speaks of the same motives.

*What is the love of benevolence, and what is that of complacency ?*

The love of benevolence, according to Saint Thomas, is that love whereby we wish the well-being or happiness of another, without any reference to our own gain. When we know that the object we love possesses this happiness, then we love this object with a love of complacency. The object of these two loves is God and every good he possesses, intrinsic or extrinsic. The love of complacency confines itself sometimes to the happiness which God possesses in himself. But the love of benevolence by an affectionate desire, ardently wishes to God the extrinsic good which he has not ; that is, the glory of being known, adored, loved, and served by the whole world. No saint ever loved God without wishing his extrinsic glory. Read the Psalms of David ;

the writings of St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales; in short, of all who have ever been penetrated with the love of God, and you will find that they all, most ardently, desire God's extrinsic glory. In man, says Saint Francis de Sales, the love of benevolence precedes the love of complacency. But in God, the love of complacency precedes the love of benevolence.—When God created the world through his benevolence, and all things therein, “He saw that it was good.” Hence, says Saint Augustin, God created all things, because he is infinitely powerful, and then approved of them, because he is infinitely good. In us the complacency we feel in considering his infinite perfections, is the great motive of divine love, as this divine love is the great mover of this complacency. The manner and order this love may be formed in our souls are as follow. We know by faith that God is infinitely perfect; we consider attentively these perfections, sometimes separately, sometimes as united altogether, we occupy our thoughts about them, and fill our minds with them; we ingulph ourselves deeply in this heavenly contemplation. When our minds are well filled with them, it is impossible but our hearts must be charmed and transported at the sight of so many perfections. Our will thus greatly affected is attracted towards the same object, and that with great freedom and pleasure. The soul then filled with admiration exalts in thoughts or in words, the supreme majesty of heaven, his goodness, his sanctity, his providence, his mercy, his justice. It feels that nothing in the world is worthy its attention, its regards, its love, but God. It is thus that we admire the beauties and perfections that we find in God, and that we

rejoice in them and at them. The love springing up then in the soul, is called the love of complacency; and it is so called, because the pleasure of God is more pleasing to us than our own pleasure. As the complacency which God takes in his creatures is nothing else but a continuation of the benevolence he has towards them; in like manner the benevolence we have for God is nothing else but a continuation of the complacency which his divine perfections produce in us; for we cannot be truly said to wish or desire any thing for one who possesses all, and wants nothing. As Saint Francis de Sales says, "O! how I love the impossibility I am under of not being able to desire any thing for my God; because, this impossibility proceeds from the immensity of his abundance; an abundance so truly infinite, that if an infinite desire could be found, this infinite desire would be infinitely gratified by his infinite goodness, and would be changed into an infinite complacency." It is likewise a species of this love of complacency, when considering that we are utterly incapable of procuring any essential glory for God, we wish that the complacency which his infinite perfections produce in us may be increased still more; and when to succeed in this pleasure we sacrifice all sorts of satisfactions, even innocent and natural ones, in order to take pleasure in God alone. The love of benevolence produces always the praise of the beloved object. And in proportion as we take pleasure in praising God, we are displeased with ourselves in not being able to praise God—we are displeased with ourselves in not being able to praise him still more. This made holy David and



all the saints invite all creatures to join with them, and help them to praise the Lord, who alone merits all praise, love, adoration and glory. By affective love we love God, and every thing that he loves. By effective love we serve God, and do every thing he orders. Affectionate love fills us with complacency, benevolence, sighs, desires, and spiritual ardours. Effective love makes us form solid resolutions, and produces that firm courage, that inviolable obedience to the will of God, which makes us conform our will in all things to his holy will and good pleasure. The saints who had this affectionate love to a great degree, were always forming wishes and desires of doing something or other for the object of their love, and when they could do nothing they eagerly sought to suffer, and be despised for his sake, in order to give him some proofs of their love. This made Saint John of the Cross say, "Let me be always despised and suffer for thee." Saint Teresa, "Let me suffer or die." Saint Mary Magdalen de pazzi, "Let me suffer and not die." Whenever affectionate love is in the mind, effective love will ever accompany it. Mankind do not reckon much on protestations of friendship, when accompanied with no other proofs or marks than bare words. Saint John had this idea, when he desired us "not to love God only in word and in speech, but in deed and in truth." From these reasons it follows, that our love for God should not be merely and barely affectionate, but should be effective also. For it was thus that God loved us. He did not merely love us in his mind, but proved it externally by his actions. For what has not our God done for us? What has he not suffered for us? Hence, our Saviour says, "If you love me, keep my command-

ments." If you ask a man, says Saint Gregory the Great, whether he loves God, he will confidently answer, he does. Let him prove it then. The proof of love is the exhibition of deeds. And St. John says, that a man who declares he loves God, but does not keep his commandments, is a liar. The searcher only of hearts can certainly know whether we have the love of God; "For the holy scripture says that no one knows certainly whether he be worthy of love or hatred." Though this ignorance be terrible, it is, however, necessary to us, in order to work out our salvation in fear and trembling, to keep our souls in a state of humility, to awaken our vigilance, to preserve and practice the christian virtues, which we could not practice, unless in this uncertainty. All we can do here below is to conjecture with more or less probability.

*First*—Where the love of God is, it carries in its train the great christian virtues, particularly the love of our neighbour, humility, patience, disinterestedness, disengagement from the things of this world, a spirit of self-denial and mortification.

*Secondly*—The love of God will ever root out or conquer the predominant passion; for the principal sacrifice which God requires of us is, to give up our predominant passion.

*Thirdly*—A sincere desire of advancing in perfection: any one, therefore, who would say, I do enough to acquit myself of my duty to God, and I ought not, I think, take more pains to advance in virtue, does not, certainly, love God.

*Fourthly*—To be alarmed with doubts whether we love God or not, for the great treasure of him who loves God is the love of God.

*Fifthly*—A contempt of the censure which a christian life brings on us from the world. Most of mankind live in a manner so directly opposite to the gospel and its rules, that it is almost impossible to avoid an air of singularity, when a person wishes to serve God. The condescension the world requires of us to conform to its maxims and customs is in general incompatible with the practice of the great virtues of humility, patience, modesty, the love of God, the love of penance, &c. In short, we can never live to please the world, and practice with fidelity the law of God at the same time; hence it is, that in undertaking to live like a christian, we may expect as an unavoidable consequence, to be blamed and censured by worldlings. It vents its spite, and wreaks its malice on true christians, by raillery, derision, mockery, &c. If these make us quit the service of God, it is plain, that we don't love God above all things. Scripture is plain here. "If I sought to please men, I should not please God," said St. Paul.

*Sixth*—A desire of possessing God. The love of God, and the desire of possessing him are so mutually connected one with another, that wherever the desire is, there the love is also.

Marks given by the Saints. Saint Laurence Justinian says, "Gladly to think of God, gladly to give to God, gladly to suffer for God." He explains it thus:—Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also; consequently, if God be our treasure, our heart will be often fixed on him. Again Saint Augustine says—"My love is my weight." If love then be in our heart, it will even weigh down the heart to the object of its love, therefore we will often think of him. As thinking often of God is

one of the marks of the love of God, we should make use of a thousand pious little artifices to recal him to our minds—as pious ejaculations, prostrations when alone, &c. These external practices are seemingly trifling, but their motive being good, and the end great, they should never be slighted.

Gladly to give for, or to God. Charity being a mutual friendship between God and man, it comprehends not only a mutual good will, but also a mutual communication of goods.

Gladly to suffer for God is the surest mark of all. “There is a friend,” says the Holy Ghost, “who is so while he finds it his interest; but he flies off in the day of affliction.” Deem no love genuine and true, but a strong, generous, and active love; a love ready to suffer; a love that is purified by passing through the fire of tribulation.

Marks given by other Saints :

*First*—To desire and wish ardently and sincerely to love God: for a sincere desire of possessing any thing is never remote from the possession, when the possession depends on the desire.

*Secondly*—To think of God with pleasure; and to be glad to hear him spoken of. On the contrary, to think often on the world and its pleasures, &c. is a bad sign.

*Thirdly*—To think of sin with horror, and to look on the misfortune of committing a mortal sin as the greatest that could befall you.

*Fourthly*—To endeavour to fulfil all the commandments of God, and of the Church for the sake of God.

## THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION is a sacrament by which we receive the Holy Spirit with an entire fulness of his gifts and graces, and by which we are made perfect Christians. It is so called, because the holy fathers called it *confirmatio* in Latin. This true, indeed, the *Episcopos* sends the Holy Ghost: but the *consecratio* is a sacrament of Confirmation. *Episcopos* makes us *Christians*, but not perfect *Christians* — *Confirmation* makes us perfect *Christians*. *Confirmation* increases and perfects in us, the grace of *Baptism* and gives us strength to conquer *sin* in *Christus*. For should a *Christian* who was baptized be attacked with *sin*, *Confirmation* is required in him. *Confirmation* would give him courage to die for his faith, as *Christ* did *not* *hesitate* to die for us, rather than *re-baptize* us.

It is the duty of every *Christian* to receive *Confirmation*, when he is of age to receive it. For, as *Christ* has required this sacrament to make us perfect *Christians*, so *God* has made it necessary as a *sign* of our *faith* in *Christ*. The Church has likewise required of her children, who are capable of it, to be confirmed, because they should be able to receive it one of the most powerful of *God* that they should receive here on earth, to fortify in their faith and secure their salvation.

*Confirmation* requires in a person who receives it, that he have preserved his *baptism*. Those who are so unhappy as to lose this by mortal sin, are obliged to regain

a state of grace by contrition and confession : otherwise, far from gaining the grace of Confirmation, they would commit a most grievous sacrilege, by presuming to receive this sacrament in that state. They should be instructed in the principal mysteries of religion, in the sacraments, and particularly in what regards Confirmation. They should fervently desire to receive the Holy Ghost, with his graces and gifts, and earnestly beg them by the most fervent prayers. For the apostles themselves did not receive the Holy Ghost till after they had persevered in prayer from Ascension Thursday till Pentecost Sunday. Lastly, the confirmed after receiving the benediction should retire a while to thank God for granting them so efficacious and so excellent a remedy to preserve their faith, to resist their enemies, and to secure their salvation.

As the ceremonies used by the Church in Confirmation have a signification truly august, truly venerable, it will not be useless, I hope, to explain them a little to you.

*First.*—The Bishop lays his hands on the person he confirms, to draw down on him the divine blessing, and to signify that the Holy Ghost will descend on him with a fulness of his graces and gifts.

*Secondly.*—He anoints him with the holy oil on the forehead in the form of a cross, saying, I mark you with the sign of the cross and confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, &c.

The unction is made with the oil of olive mixed with balm. The peculiar property of oil is to soften and strengthen. By using it here, it is insinuated that the grace of the Holy Ghost softens

what seems hard in the yoke of the gospel, and makes us undertake it with courage. The sweet odour of the balm, marks that the Christian who is ready to confess the faith of Jesus Christ ought to edify his neighbour by the odour of his virtues and good example. *Christi bonus odor summus Deo.*—2nd Cor. The unction is made by the thumb alone, which is the strongest of the fingers, because the Holy Ghost who is given by this sacrament is called the finger of God. *Digitus Dei est hic.* It is made on the forehead, because the forehead is the highest and most conspicuous part of the body, and because the symptoms of fear and shame appear principally on the forehead. This should give us to understand that we ought to make a constant and open profession of the faith of Christ, and that we ought never be ashamed to confess his holy name, or to follow the humble maxims he has taught us. For those who blush on earth to acknowledge Christ or to profess his doctrine, will not be owned by him when he comes in his Majesty and Glory.

Finally, the unction is made in form of a cross to teach us that we should glory in the cross of Christ, as the instrument of our salvation and redemption. The Bishop strikes him on the cheek to recall to our minds the ignominious blows that Christ has received in his passion. A blow on the cheek is reckoned by all a gross insult. The Church, therefore, by this mystical action, teaches us that we should be ready to suffer the most outrageous insults for the love of Christ, and herein follow the example of the Prince of the Apostles,

who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when treated ill, threatened not.

Lastly, the Bishop wishes peace to the confirmed, the peace of God which surpasses all sentiment, all thought, and which is the most precious of all blessings, *Pax Dei quæ exuperat omnem sensum*, and to teach him that the best method of having peace with God, our neighbour and ourselves, is to bear patiently our sufferings and persecutions.

Confirmation does not confer now, as it did in the early ages of Christianity, the gifts of tongues and miracles. For these gifts were then necessary for the propagation of the Christian religion. However, my dear children, it still confers and will ever confer great graces on all those who receive it with proper disposition. It will make such people still speak the language of God. It will make their discourses more replete with piety and devotion. It will banish from their conversation the profane language of the world, the language of wrath, of detraction, of perfidy, of libertinism. This would be a language unknown to a great many in this corrupt age; and if the Holy Ghost will not grant you now the gift of tongues, be persuaded, my dear children, that he will grant you a greater and more useful gift, if he confers on you the gift of moderating well your own tongue.

Another effect of Confirmation is to profess courageously the faith of Christ. Though we have now-a-days no cause to fear the frowns of tyrants or the menaces of persecutors, we still have enemies to fight with not less dangerous, nor less to be dreaded than the others just mentioned. These



enemies are the world and yourselves. In the world you'll find, alas! many who will endeavour to shake the firmness of your faith by speaking to you the language of impiety. Oppose to such discourses, my dear children, a courage worthy of the soldiers of Jesus Christ; support the interest and glory of your master, and confound the wicked wretch, by testifying a just horror of his impiety. You would not suffer in silence any silly or wicked man to speak in an infamous manner in your presence of your father or mother; and how can you bear to hear outrageously insulted before you, that Father from whom you have received your being, and from whom you expect eternal rewards.

You'll find likewise in the world, my dear children, people set on by the devil to ridicule piety and to laugh at our attention in practising the duties of religion. When you once receive this sacrament of strength and courage, their impious mockery will make no impression on you. You'll pity their great blindness, and in spite of their derision, you'll boldly profess the faith of Christ; you'll fear God and not man.

Lastly, my dear children, you'll find in the world every kind of vice authorised by many examples, and this too, perhaps, among your own relations and friends. Their irregular and disorderly lives will prove a constant source of temptation to you to follow their bad examples. On every side you'll see vice applauded and bad passions justified. These are your persecutors, and to resist them great courage is required. You receive this courage in the sacrament of Confirmation, if you are faithful to its grace. Recollect, my dear children, that what is authorised by the multitude only, is

generally condemned by the law of God; that whatever is justified by the world only, is as criminal as the world itself; that to be a true Christian we must imitate Jesus Christ, and that we can never imitate Jesus Christ while we imitate the world.

Another enemy you have to fight, more terrible and more dangerous than the world, is yourselves. Alas! my dear children, your passions will grow stronger and stronger every day, and the corruption of your nature will acquire additional force. Perhaps already in some of ye, they have produced full-grown vices and have stained the robe of innocence ye had received in Baptism. If your passions young and still growing have proved stronger than ye, what will ye do, when they shall have acquired their full strength and age.

My dear children, resist your passions and vices early; accustom yourselves to conquer them when young and weak, and these endeavours will draw down from Heaven on ye abundant graces the rest of your lives. You'll live in the world without being infected by its corruption, and God will preserve ye as he did the three Hebrew children in the midst of the flames, because their early years were agreeable to him. All then, my dear children, in a great measure, depends on a good beginning. If your conduct when young be holy and regular, virtue and the fear of the Lord will accompany you through life. If you sow blessings, you will reap an abundant crop of blessings, and God will accept the pure offerings of your youth as a victim most agreeable to him.

On the other hand, if you are so unhappy as to stray from the paths of virtue into the high road of

vice you'll be exposed to fall every step you afterwards make through life. For the devil having once deprived you of the sanctity you received in Baptism, and the strength you received in Confirmation, will find nothing in you to withstand his attacks ; you'll be an undoubted victim of his seductions and of your own weakness ; in the same proportion that you advance in years, you'll advance in iniquity ; you began by forgetting God, and you'll end by despising him. He that sows, says the Apostle, in the flesh, shall reap in the flesh. If the root be rotten, the branches that spring from it cannot be sound. By crimes you are preparing for yourselves days of troubles, anxiety and remorse, and in old age repining and melancholy, and abandoned by God.

Happy is he then, my dear children, who has carried the yoke of the Lord from his youth ; God will heap blessings on his head : his passions timely suppressed will be more tractable ; virtue will cost him but little trouble ; his dispositions turned early towards his duty, will afterwards tend naturally there themselves ; his days will be easy, his life holy, his old age respected, and his death, like his life, a quick passage to a happy immortality.

FINIS.

---

DUBLIN : PRINTED BY JOHN COYNE,  
24, *Croke-street*.







